A

LETTER

OF

THE CELEBRATED JOHN FOSTER

TO A YOUNG MINISTER,

ON THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT:

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF EXTRACTS FROM ORTHODOX WRITERS,

AND AN

EARNEST APPEAL

TO

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

IN REGARD TO THE

CHARACTER OF ITS PUBLICATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

Mr. Ryland, in his very valuable "Life and Correspondence of John Foster," informs us that the following Letter was written "to a young minister, in answer to one in which he stated his inquiries and difficulties on the subject of the eternity of future punishments." We learn from the Eclectic Review, that this minister was the Rev. E. White, of Hereford. Mr. Ryland also remarks in his Preface: —

"On one point only of dogmatic theology Mr. Foster dissented from the religious community with which he was most intimately connected. Allusions to this subject (the Duration of Future Punishment) occur in two or three passages of his early correspondence; but it is discussed at some length in a letter to a young minister, written in 1841. Without offering an opinion on 'the moral argument,' which to a mind of so high an order carried irresistible force, or inquiring what exceptions may be taken to those views of mankind and the present life to which it may appear that that argument owes much of its cogency, — and while those who differ from him, and not a few, probably, who would assent to his views, may regret that the statements of Scripture are not more fully discussed, — it may be permitted, in justice to his memory, to remark, that, in Mr. Foster's mind, as is evident from his other writings, *this belief was associated with the holiest views of the Divine Being, and with a most elevated standard of moral excellence;* nor among those who deem him mistaken on this subject could any one be found who would more earnestly deprecate that a theo-

logical speculation should occupy the thoughts to the neglect of practical, personal piety. (Luke xiii. 23, 24.)"

In respect to the importance of the subject discussed in this Letter, there can be but one opinion. In the language of Professor Stuart, —

"Next to the inquiry, *Whether the soul is immortal*, stands, in point of importance and interest, the question, *Whether there is a state of reward and punishment beyond the grave, and whether that state is* ETERNAL. A more fearful question cannot be raised by the human mind, than by asking, *Whether the punishment of the wicked in a future world is to be regarded as* ENDLESS. No reflecting man can wonder, that so many among us are deeply agitated by this subject." — *Biblical Repository, July*, 1840.

This Letter is commended to the especial attention of those whose theological views agree in general with those of Mr. Foster. If any of this class hesitate about reading it, they are earnestly requested, before deciding to throw it down unread, to consider the following questions, with the answers as given throughout in borrowed language.*

1. Were the intellectual powers and habits of Mr. Foster such as to entitle his opinions upon an important subject to a respectful consideration?

"Of the English minds that have departed from our world within a few years, none have excited a deeper interest, or wielded for a season a loftier power, than John Foster and Robert Hall. They

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* It will be observed, that this small book contains little except selections from various writers. Of these writers, the Editor is not aware that any one, except Mr. Foster, rejected the doctrine of endless punishment, and most of them distinctly express their belief in it. He has confined his selections within these limits, in order that the testimony which he adduces may be regarded as unexceptionable. It is perhaps needless to add, that, in making these selections, he does not wish to be understood as adopting for his own any sentiment or statement which they may contain, and that he uses the term *orthodox* in its popular acceptation.

were both triumphant instances of the superiority of intellect, and the homage that will be paid to it, over all circumstance and mere external distinction." — *Rev. G. B. Cheever, D. D., Biblical Repository, January*, 1847.

"During the latter years of his life, Robert Hall was brought, by his removal to Bristol, into close association and friendship with another of the most eminent writers of his age, John Foster. They constituted together a kind of double star in the moral firmament; but the light they emitted, though in both cases resplendent and benign, exhibited striking varieties. . . . . As a thinker, Foster was the most profound. *His mind was a fathoming line*, which he perpetually employed in *penetrating the depths* of sentiment, and *fetching up the purest gems. Diving to those profundities* seemed easy to him, and he could extend the search to places far beyond the reach of most, even distinguished, intellects. He was not like Coleridge, who would lose himself and others in *metaphysical subtleties*, or *shapeless imaginings;* but he had, with some exceptions, *the clearest idea of what he intended to unfold*, and could plunge into the deepest waters with his eyes open." — *North British Review, November*, 1845.

"He was a remarkably profound thinker. *His mind was a fathoming line*, which he perpetually employed in *penetrating the depths* of nature, and *fetching up the purest gems* of truth and sentiment. *Diving to those profundities* seemed easy to him, and he could extend the search to places far beyond the reach of most, even distinguished, intellects. . . . . He had *the clearest idea of what he intended to unfold*, and never lost himself and others in *metaphysical subtleties and shapeless imaginings*. He never was satisfied with dim and shadowy views of a subject." — *Rev. W. W. Everts*, "*Life and Thoughts of John Foster*," pp. 20, 21.

"It was not possible that an intellect of such power as that of Foster, when taking such a direction, should fail of originality. It was an intellect which travelled further than that of other men, and it would of necessity see more. . . . . Foster did not need to be assured that there are barriers which the human spirit may not pass; but he was not always prepared to admit that those barriers were so near as priests and people, in their indolence or credulity, were pleased to suppose. He was convinced that there were more

distinct, more profound, and sometimes far other views than the popular to be attained on most subjects, and he sought to attain them." — *British Quarterly Review, as reprinted in the Eclectic Magazine, November*, 1846.

"The memoirs of such a man as John Foster must, of necessity, possess very peculiar attractions. It is certainly natural, and, we think, not unpraiseworthy, to wish to become more nearly acquainted with a man, whose writings have been perused with admiration wherever the English language is spoken or understood; whose calm, transparent, and impressive thoughts have, in their acquaintance and contact, cut out new channels of thought in ten thousand other minds; *whose dignified and sober views of life, religion, and immortality are adapted to shed so hallowed a spirit over all who become familiar with them;* and whose style and vocabulary, showing him a perfect master of our mother-tongue, taken in connection with his other noble characteristics as an author, well entitle him to the quaint description of his contemporary, Robert Hall, — 'a great lumbering wagon, loaded with gold.' . . . . . We are glad to find ourselves in possession of so much additional matter from the *well-nigh inspired pen* of this great master in English composition." — *Rev. S. F. Smith, Editor of the Christian Review, October*, 1846.

"From this law of the ascendency of genius, — the supremacy of intellect, — we predict the growing fame of JOHN FOSTER; which, notwithstanding its present comparative greatness, is yet in its bud." — *Rev. W. W. Everts.*

"There can be no doubt that John Foster is one of those very few individuals whom God, at long intervals, sends into the world in order to enlarge the empire of thought." — *Rev. D. W. Phillips, Christian Review, January*, 1849.

"*The soul of Foster was one of the most gigantic that has ever tabernacled in flesh.* It was most richly endowed in all those faculties necessary to constitute one a Christian moralist. His power of observation was great; his perception of the sublime and beautiful was keen; the grasp of his intellect has never been surpassed; his imagination was kindred to that of the best poets; his benevolence was tender and comprehensive; his conception of justice and his sense of moral obligation were fully adequate to the

task of guiding such a huge soul through the tempestuous sea of life; his veneration for the great and good, wherever found, was strong; and his prostrations before the most high God were made with the greatest reverence and abasement; his firmness could withstand the world in hostile array, and look it out of countenance; his sensibilities were delicate; and his literary taste was fastidious, and generally correct." — *Do., do., March*, 1849.

2. Were the opinions of Mr. Foster upon the duration of future punishment held for a short time only, or without much thought upon this and kindred subjects?

"In his twenty-fifth year, Foster had relinquished the latter of these doctrines [that of eternal punishment], and was never afterwards a believer in it."* — *British Quarterly Review* (*Eclectic Magazine, November*, 1846).

"It is not to be wondered at that his religious feelings were mostly conversant with the mysterious. *The state of the departed especially engaged his thoughts.* To know the secrets of the world to come was almost a passion with him, — a passion revived and quickened by the deaths of his friends, and his own approaching dissolution. 'The nearer I approach by advancing age to the grand experiment, the more inquisitive, I might almost say restlessly inquisitive, I become, respecting that other scene and state of existence.'" — *Eclectic Review, September*, 1846.

"Of revealed truths, he dwelt almost habitually upon the awful and the threatening. *No uninspired man ever saw farther into such subjects, or felt them more deeply.* During the latter half of his life, he seems to have had his being in the very shadow of the everlasting world. He was ever trying to peep through the chinks in the 'dead wall.' He longed to know what there was beyond. *We have never met with a writer whose soul was so full of the solemnities of the future state.* There is not a book in the English language more full of eternity than Foster's 'Living for Immortality.' No one ever felt more profoundly than he the terribleness of dying

* The Letter here reprinted was written at the age of seventy-one, after nearly half a century of quiet, thoughtful, avowed maintenance of such views, and in the near prospect of death.

an enemy to God." — *Rev. D. W. Phillips, Christian Review, January*, 1849.

3. Did these opinions of Mr. Foster result from great defects in his religious or moral character, or did they produce such defects ?

"We should have liked very much to present various specimens of Mr. Foster's style of sentiment and writing from his correspondence; but it is impossible. Nor can we attempt to characterize its contents. One thing appears in it with beautiful distinctness, — *the deep and humble piety of the writer*. This was the conservative influence of his intellect and heart. . . . . We reverence Mr. Foster's character and intellect, and no feature of his mind has more powerfully excited our respect than that depth and delicacy of moral feeling which shrunk from the conception of everlasting punishment." — *Eclectic Review, September*, 1846.

"Such was he to his fellow-men. Before God, he deeply *abased himself*. He saw 'Him who is invisible'; and in such a mind as his, the *contrast of infinite grandeur and excellence with mere nothingness and pollution* would present itself in a vivid light to his intellectual vision. But with him, this humbling view of himself became a *deeply penetrating emotion;* and it seemed to him not less *preposterous* than *impious* to assume any other posture than that of deep abasement before Him 'whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain'; and 'in whose sight the heavens are not clean.'" — *Crisp's Sermon on the death of Foster, as quoted by Ryland.*

"Before God, he *abased himself*. He saw Him who was invisible; and the *contrast of infinite grandeur and excellence with mere nothingness and pollution* presented itself in a vivid light to his intellectual vision. With him, this humbling view of self became a *deeply-penetrating emotion;* and it seemed to him not less *preposterous* than *impious* to assume any other position than that of deep abasement before the Divine Being." — *Rev. W. W. Everts*, "*Life and Thoughts of John Foster*," p. 46.

"But what gives us inexpressible pleasure in contemplating this great man, is the fact that his moral faculties were the predominant elements of his character. From his childhood till the day of his

death, his conduct was most exemplary. All insincerity, hypocrisy, and empty show, he hated with all his heart. His recoil from these evils carried him at times almost beyond the golden mean. *His conception of the holiness which God has made it the duty of man to strive after, was most sublime.* . . . . . He was as benevolent as he was conscientious. In all his writings, he aimed at promoting the highest happiness of man." — *Rev. D. W. Phillips, Christian Review, January,* 1849.

4. Did Mr. Foster lose his standing, reputation, or influence as an *orthodox* Christian and minister, by the adoption of such views?

"On the then recent resignation of their pastor, correspondence had been held between my nearest connections and the late venerable Robert Hall; a letter from whom (Dec. 26, 1803) names 'Mr. Foster, of Downend, near Bristol,' as 'a young man of the most original and extraordinary genius, of unexceptionable character, of most amiable temper,' and suggests 'that, as he is probably at liberty, it may be thought fit to apply to him.' . . . . . These communications induced a request on the part of the church, that Mr. Hall would solicit Mr. Foster's ministerial aid at Frome. His reply, after ascertaining Mr. F.'s willingness to visit us, (Feb., 1804,*) confirmed the preceding statements as follows: — 'His manner is not very popular, but his conceptions are most extraordinary and original; his disposition very amiable, his piety unquestionable, and his sentiments *moderately orthodox, — about the level of Watts and Doddridge*, which, if I am not mistaken, are pretty congenial with those of the Frome society. He holds the

* Mr. Foster explicitly declares his rejection of the doctrine of endless punishment in a letter addressed, as early as October 17, 1796, to his tutor, and intimate friend through life, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, the founder and secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and afterwards expresses his views upon the subject, without any apparent reserve, in his correspondence with other friends. The comparison to Watts is made by Mr. Foster himself in a letter to Mr. Hughes, Feb. 17, 1799: — "I am probably in the same parallel of latitude, with respect to orthodoxy, as the revered Dr. Watts in the late maturity of his thoughts."

mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ most strenuously, without which an angel from heaven would, in my opinion, do no good as a minister. I ardently wish Mr. Foster may be approved among you, and be the means of bringing many sons to glory.'"—*John Sheppard, Esq.*, "*Notices of Mr. Foster as a Preacher and Companion.*"

"Foster appears to have held, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, a doctrine on the subject of future retributions not only unwarranted by Scripture, but directly contradicting the testimony of Scripture. He does not appear to have practised any concealment on the subject,—indeed, concealment of his views, or even of his conjectures, upon such a subject, would have been foreign to his nature. And yet it does not appear that Foster's standing or influence was at all affected by his views on that subject."—*New York Evangelist, December* 17, 1846.

"He was apt to be invaded by gloomy sentiments respecting the awful moral condition of our nature, and the tremendously mysterious economy of the Divine government. 'At some moments of my life,' he says, 'the world, mankind, religion, and eternity, appear to me like one vast scene of tremendous confusion, stretching before me far away, and closed in shades of the most awful darkness; a darkness which only the most powerful splendors of Deity can illumine, and which appear as if they never yet had *illumined* it.' These difficulties will surprise inferior minds not capable of tracing out the more difficult relations of truth, in every direction running into mystery; and some, influenced by envy or bigotry, will attempt to asperse his reputation by harsh epithets. Narrow and perverse minds, that would sooner carp at supposed spots in the sun, than rejoice in its light beaming upon them and the world, may enviously point out and censoriously criticize isolate sections or passages. His adventurous mind did, especially in regard to future punishment, raise questions of speculation beyond the limits of the human understanding. If any suppose his views upon that subject are not certainly and necessarily contrary to revelation, all will agree that they lie beyond its scope; and *if true, would never have been revealed*, as being liable to be abused, and not calculated to succour virtue or repress vice. But to attempt to array him on the side of modern universalism, as practically

developed in England and in this country, would be like associating Michael with the evil angels fighting against truth, holiness, and God."—*Rev. W. W. Everts*, "*Life and Thoughts of John Foster*," p. 47.

"*Few, however, endowed with his originality and independence of mind, his love and power of speculation, have held so consistent and firm a faith.* He maintained steadfastly the fundamental doctrines of revelation; the ruined state of man; the necessity of a Divine intervention; atonement by a Divine Mediator; and of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. At an early period of life, after his most painful conflicts, he writes to Mr. Hughes:—'The greatest part of my views are, I believe, accurately Calvinistic; for a long while past I have fully felt the necessity of dismissing subtle speculations and distinctions, and of yielding an humble, cordial assent to the mysterious truth, just *as* and *because* the Scriptures declare it, without inquiring, How can these things be? Even at the time I refer to, I had not the slightest doubt respecting the doctrine of the atonement. I have always, without the interval of a moment, deemed it a grand essential of Christianity.' —'I am verily persuaded that no man embraces this part of the Gospel with a firmer belief or a warmer joy than I do. I solemnly aver that all my habitual confidence, as to what I shall become or accomplish, rests exclusively here. The alternative is *such* a hope, or flat despair.'—'The doctrine of Divine assistance, the gracious agency of the Holy Spirit, is infinitely consolatory to me,—a doctrine without which I should sink into despondency and despair.' A short time before his death, he said to a friend, 'How dreary would old age and illness be without the great doctrine of the atonement!'"—*Do., do.*, p. 50.

LETTER.

September 24th, 1841.

DEAR SIR, —

If you could have been apprized how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an opinion (or impression) admitted in early life dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal,* judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question, Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error ? And the language of

* More of "various reading" in ecclesiastical history, ancient and modern, would have perhaps led Mr. Foster to modify somewhat this statement. See APPENDIX C. His impression, however, in respect to the opinions of others, shows, in a most striking light, how resistless, to his logical mind, must have been those moral arguments and those convictions of truth, which compelled him to stand, as he imagined, almost alone against the Christian world. Nor would they allow him to yield even to the 'formidably strong language of Scripture.'

Scripture is formidably strong ; so strong, that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself *not* convinced of the orthodox doctrine. If asked *why* not, I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of Scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favor of final, universal restitution. It is the MORAL ARGUMENT, as it may be named, that *presses irresistibly on my mind*, — that which comes in the STUPENDOUS IDEA OF ETERNITY.

It appears to me that the teachers and believers of the orthodox doctrine hardly ever make an earnest, strenuous effort to form a conception of eternity ; or rather a conception somewhat of the nature of a faint, incipient approximation. Because it is confessedly beyond the compass of thought, it is suffered to go without an attempt at thinking of it. They utter the term in the easy currency of language, have a vague and transitory idea of something obscurely vast, and do not labor to place and detain the mind in intense protracted contemplation, seeking all expedients for expanding and aggravating the awful import of such a word. Though every mode of illustration is feeble and impotent, one would surely think there would be an insuppressible impulse to send forth the thoughts to the utmost possible reach into the immensity, — when it is *an immensity into which our own most essential interests are infinitely extended.* Truly, it *is* very strange, that even religious minds can keep so quietly aloof from the amazing, the overwhelming contemplation of what they have the destiny and the near prospect of entering upon.

Expedients of illustration of what eternity is *not*, supply the best attainable means of assisting remotely toward a glimmering apprehension of what it *is*. All that is within human capacity is to imagine the vastest measures of *time*, and to look to the termination of these as only touching the mere commencement of eternity.

For example: it has been suggested * to imagine the number of particles, atoms, contained in this globe, and suppose them one by one annihilated, each in a thousand years, till all were gone; but just as well say, a million, or a million of millions, of years or ages, — it is all the same as against infinite duration.

Extend the thought of such a process to our whole mundane system, and finally to the whole material universe; it is still the same. Or, imagine a series of numerical figures, in close order, extended to a line of such a length that it would encircle the globe, like the equator, — or that would run along with the earth's orbit round the sun, or with the outermost planet, Uranus, — or that it would draw a circle of which the radius should be from the earth or sun to Sirius, — or that should encompass the entire material universe, which, as being material, cannot be infinite. The most stupendous of these measures of *time* would have an end; and would, when completed, be still *nothing to eternity*.

Now think of an infliction of misery protracted through such a period, and at the end of it being only *commencing*, — not one smallest step nearer a conclusion, — the case just the same if that sum of figures were multiplied by itself. And then think of *man*, — his nature,

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* In the Spectator, I think. — Author. (No. 575, *Monday, Aug.* 2, 1714. — Eng. Ed.)

his situation, the circumstances of his brief sojourn and trial on earth. Far be it from us to make light of the demerit of sin, and to remonstrate with the supreme Judge against a severe chastisement, of whatever moral nature we may regard the infliction to be. But still, what is man? He comes into the world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil.* He comes among a crowd of temptations adapted to his innate evil propensities. He grows up (incomparably the greater portion of the race) in great ignorance, his judgment weak, and under numberless beguilements into error; while his passions and appetites are strong, his conscience unequally matched against their power, — in the majority of men, but feebly and rudely constituted. The influence of whatever good instructions he may receive is counteracted by a combination of opposite influences almost constantly acting on him. He is essentially and inevitably unapt to be powerfully acted on by what is invisible and future. In addition to all which, there is the intervention and activity of the great tempter and destroyer. In short, his condition is such that there is no hope of him, but from a direct, special operation on him of what we denominate grace. *Is* it not so? *are* we not convinced? *is* it not the plain doctrine of Scripture? *is* there not irresistible evidence, from a view of the actual condition of the human world,

* "The very intelligent Mr. G. reasoned against the Calvinistic doctrine of original depravity, — evidently, I perceived, from his feeling respecting that of eternal punishments. Believing this last, he was anxious, as a kind of palliation of its severity, to make man as *accountable* a being as possible, by making his vice entirely optional, and so making all his depravity his crime." — *Mr. Foster's Journal*, *No.* 485.

that no man can become good, in the Christian sense, — can become fit for a holy and happy place hereafter, — but by this operation *ab extra ?* But this is arbitrary and discriminative on the part of the sovereign Agent, and independent of the will of man. And how awfully evident is it, that this indispensable operation takes place only on a comparatively small proportion of the collective race !

Now this creature, thus constituted and circumstanced, passes a few fleeting years on earth, a short, sinful course, in which he does often what, notwithstanding his ignorance and ill-disciplined judgment and conscience, he knows to be wrong, and neglects what he knows to be his duty ; and, consequently, for a greater or less measure of guilt, widely different in different offenders, deserves punishment. But ENDLESS PUNISHMENT ! HOPELESS MISERY, *through a duration to which the enormous terms above imagined will be absolutely* NOTHING ! I acknowledge my *inability* (I would say it reverently) *to admit this belief, together with a belief in the Divine goodness*, — the belief that " God is love," that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness ; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the Divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an " unknown God." But, if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such a condition that they certainly will

and must — *must* by their nature and circumstances — go wrong, and be miserable, unless prevented by especial grace, which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and at the same time affixing on their delinquency *a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel's faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror!* *

It must be in deep humility that we venture to apply to the measures of the Divine government the rules indispensable to the equity of human administration. Yet we may advert to the principle in human legislation, that the man tempted to crime should, as far as it is possible without actual experience, be apprized of the nature and measure of the penal consequence. It should be something the main force of which can be placed in intelligible *opposition*, so to speak, to the temptation. If it be something totally out of the scope of his faculties

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* "He [Foster] had the most overwhelming conceptions of the vastness of eternity. John Foster could not pronounce the word ETERNITY, as he would any other word of four syllables, without an attempt to comprehend its meaning. But he strove to penetrate the fearful depths of its infinite import. He applied to it the measuring line of human arithmetic, till finite numbers were exhausted. He sent his imagination forth to explore the infinite expanse, till it paused on its weary wing, and could advance no further. And then, when he reflected that he had as yet advanced but to the threshold, and ALL ITS UNDIMINISHED AGES STILL LAY BEYOND, he shrunk back trembling at the vastness of his own conception, and dared not come to a conclusion that would consign a portion of the human family to such an eternity of wretchedness." — *Rev. E. G. Sears, Editor of the Christian Review, January*, 1849.

It may be said, however, that some writers express very vivid conceptions of eternity, who appear either never to have had, or to have overcome, the difficulties which were so insurmountable to Foster. For examples, see APPENDIX A.

to apprehend, to realize to his mind, that *threatened something is unknown*, has not its appropriate fitness to deter him. There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him, if *he could have a competent notion of it;* but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him, the threatened penalty can only be in the proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it; but, as an evil to be suffered, it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents, suffering on, and still interminably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this? — "O, if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil."

A common argument has been that sin is an *infinite evil*, that is, of infinite demerit, as an offence against an infinite Being; and that, since a finite creature cannot suffer infinitely *in measure*, he must *in duration*. But surely, in all reason, the limited, and in the present instance *diminutive*, *nature of the criminal* must be an essential part of the case for judgment. Every act must, for one of its proportions, be measured by the nature and condition of the agent. And it would seem that one principle in that rule of proportion should be, that the offending agent should be capable of being aware of the magnitude (the *amount*, if we might use such a

word,) of the offence he commits, by being capable of something like an adequate conception of the being against whom it is committed. A perverse child, committing an offence against a great monarch, of whose dignity it *had some*, but a vastly inadequate, apprehension, would not be punished in the same manner as an offender of high endowments and responsibility, and fully aware of the dignity of the personage offended. The one would justly be sharply chastised ; the other might as justly be condemned to death. In the present case, the offender does or may know that the Being offended against is of awful majesty, and therefore the offence is one of great aggravation, and he will justly be punished with great severity ; but, by his extremely contracted and feeble faculties, as the lowest in the scale of strictly rational and accountable creatures in the whole creation, he is *infinitely incapable* of any adequate conception of the greatness of the Being offended against. He is, then, according to the argument, obnoxious to a punishment not in any proportion to his own nature, but alone to that infinity of the supreme nature, which is to him infinitely inconceivable and unknown.

If an evil act of a human being may be of infinite demerit, why may not a good one be of infinite excellence or merit, as having also a reference to the infinite Being ? Is it not plain that every act of a finite nature must have, in all senses, the *finite quality of that nature*, — cannot, therefore, be of infinite demerit ?

Can we, — I would say with reverence, — can we realize it as possible that a lost soul, after countless millions of ages, and in prospect of an interminable suc-

cession of such enormous periods, can be made to have the conviction, absolute and perfect, that *all this is a just, an equitable infliction*, and from a Power *as good as he is just*, for a few short, sinful years on earth, — years and sins presumed to be retained most vividly in memory, and everlastingly growing clearer, vaster, and more terrible to retrospective view in their magnitude of infinite evil, — every stupendous period of duration, by which they have actually been left at a distance, seeming to bring them, in contrariety to all laws of memory, nearer and ever nearer to view, by the continually aggravated experience of their consequences ?

Yes, those twenty, forty, seventy years, growing up to infinity of horror in the review, in proportion to the distance which the condemned spirit recedes from them ; — all eternity not sufficing to reveal fully what those years contained ! — MILLIONS OF AGES *for each single evil thought or word !*

But it is usually alleged that there will be an endless *continuance* of sinning, with probably an endless aggravation, and *therefore* the punishment must be endless. Is not this like an admission of disproportion between the punishment and the *original cause* of its infliction ? But suppose the case to be so, — that is to say, that the punishment is not a retribution *simply* for the guilt of the momentary existence on earth, but a continued punishment of the continued, ever aggravated guilt in the eternal state : the allegation is of no avail in vindication of the doctrine, because the first consignment to the dreadful state *necessitates a continuance of the criminality ;* the doctrine teaching that it is of the essence, and is an awful aggravation, of the original consignment, — that it

dooms the condemned to maintain the criminal spirit unchanged for ever. The doom to *sin* as well as to suffer, and, according to the argument, to sin in *order* to suffer, is inflicted as the punishment of the sin committed in the mortal state. Virtually, therefore, the eternal punishment is the punishment of the sins of time.

Under the light (or the *darkness*) of this doctrine, *how inconceivably mysterious and awful is the aspect of the whole economy of this human world!* The immensely greater number of the race hitherto, through all ages and regions, passing a short life under no illuminating, transforming influence of their Creator; ninety-nine in a hundred of them, perhaps, having never received any authenticated message from heaven; passing off the world in a state unfit for a spiritual, heavenly, and happy kingdom elsewhere; and all destined to everlasting misery! The thoughtful spirit has a question silently suggested to it, of far more emphatic import than that of him who exclaimed, "Hast thou made all men *in vain?*"

Even in the dispensation of redemption by the Mediator, the only light that shines through this dark economy, how profoundly mysterious is its slow progress, as yet, in its uncorrupted purity and saving efficacy! What proportion of the earth's inhabitants are, at this hour, the subjects of its vital agency? It was not the Divine volition that the success should be greater, — that a greater number should be saved by it, — or, most certainly, most necessarily, its efficacy *would* have been greater. But in thus withholding from so large a proportion of mankind even the knowledge, and from so vast a majority in the nominally Christian nations the

Divine application, indispensable to the efficacy of the Christian dispensation, *could it be that the Divine purpose was to consign so many of his creatures, existing under such fearful circumstances, to the doom of eternal misery?* Does the belief consist with any conception we can form of infinite goodness combined with infinite power? *

But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expressions at which we well may tremble. On *no* allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms *everlasting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import, and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this: that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable

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* See APPENDIX B., for a similar train of thought, addressed by Mr. Foster to that profound thinker and powerful writer, the Rev. John Harris, D. D., President of Cheshunt College, and author of "The Great Teacher," "Mammon," "The Great Commission," &c.; and also for a mitigated view of future punishment, expressed by Dr. Harris in a note upon Mr. Foster's letter.

duration, and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, *a reason in the moral estimate of things, of* STUPENDOUS, *of* INFINITE *urgency, involving our conceptions of the Divine goodness and equity, and leaving those conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected*, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorized. Perhaps there is some pertinence in a suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favor of universal restitution, — that the great difference of *degrees* of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture, affords an argument against its perpetuity ; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders ; every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain ; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the *principle* of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *How could* the doctrine have been more plainly and positively asserted than it is in the Scripture language ? In answer, I ask, how do *we* construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no *possibility* of understanding the language in a different, equivocal, or questionable sense ? And may we not think, that, if *so transcendently dreadful a doctrine had been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith*, there would have been such forms of proposition, of circumlocution, if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or question a mere palpable absurdity ?

Some intelligent and devout inquirers, unable to admit the terrific doctrine, and yet pressed by the strength of the Scripture *language*, have had recourse to a *literal* interpretation of the threatened destruction, the eternal death, as signifying *annihilation of existence*, *after* a more or less protracted penal infliction. Even this would be a prodigious relief; but it is an admission that the terms in question *do* mean something final, in an absolute sense. I have not directed much thought to this point; the grand object of interest being a negation of the perpetuity of misery. I have not been anxious for any satisfaction beyond *that;* though certainly one would wish to indulge the hope, founded on the Divine attribute of infinite benevolence, that there will be a period somewhere in the endless futurity, when all God's sinning creatures will be restored by him to rectitude and happiness.

It often surprises ms that the fearful doctrine sits, if I may so express it, so *easy* on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it. Surrounded immediately by the multitudes of fellow-mortals, and looking abroad on the present, and back on the past, state of the race, and regarding them, as to the immense majority, as subjects of so direful destination, how *can* they have any calm enjoyment of life, how can they be cordially cheerful, how can they escape the incessant haunting of dismal ideas, darkening the economy in which their lot is cast? * I remember suggesting to one of them such

* In respect to the still greater difficulty of conceiving that we can be perfectly happy hereafter, if any who are dear to us are hopelessly lost, Professor Stuart remarks, in the Biblical Repository, July, 1840: —"That the subject is one of fearful interest, none will deny who be-

an image as this : — Suppose the case that so many of the great surrounding population as he could not, even in a judgment of charity, believe to be Christians, that is, to be in a safe state for hereafter, — suppose the case to be that he knew so many were all doomed to suffer, by penal infliction, a death by torture, in the most protracted agony, with what feelings would he look on the populous city, the swarming country, or even a crowded, mixed congregation ? *But what an infinitesimal trifle that would be in comparison with what he does believe in looking on these multitudes.* How, then, can they bear the sight of the living world around them ? *

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lieve in future retribution. That there are difficulties pressed by it on the mind, when one thinks of his own condition, that of his beloved friends, or of his brethren of the human race, it would be *mere pretence* to deny. But it is a consolation to believe, that, behind any clouds, however dark, that interpose between us and the light of the sun, his beams still shine clearly. All will be clear in the light of heaven. *If parents, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, must see those dear as their own life perish at last, while they themselves are saved, heaven in mercy will either* EXTINGUISH THEIR SOCIAL SUSCEPTIBILITIES, *or else give them such* A SWEET AND OVERPOWERING SENSE OF THE JUSTICE AND GOODNESS OF GOD *as shall not permit the joys of the blessed to be marred, nor the songs of the redeemed to be interrupted, with sighs of sympathetic sorrow.*" — For the harsher views of Baxter, see page 87.

* " How every hostile feeling becomes mitigated into something like kindness, when its object, perhaps lately proud, assuming, unjust, is now seen oppressed into dejection by calamity. The most cruel wild beast, or more cruel man, if seen languishing in death, and raising toward us a feeble and supplicating look, would certainly move our pity. How is this ? perhaps the character is not even supposed to be really changed amid the suffering that *modifies* its expression. Do we unconsciously take any thing like a *tender feeling*, even for *self*, as a proof of some little goodness, or possibility of goodness ? Is it for those beings alone that we feel nothing, who discover a hard and

As to religious teachers, if the tremendous doctrine be true, surely it ought to be almost continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of terrible illustration ; no remission of the alarm to thoughtless spirits. What ! believe them in such inconceivably dreadful peril, and not multiply and aggravate the terrors to frighten them out of their stupor ; deploring still, that all the horrifying representations in the power of thought and language to make are immeasurably below the real urgency of the subject ; and almost wishing that some appalling phenomenon of sight or sound might break in to make the impression that no words can make ? If we saw a fellow-mortal stepping heedlessly or daringly on the utmost verge of some dreadful precipice or gulf, a humane spectator would raise and *continue* a shout, a scream, to prevent him. How then can it comport with the duty of preachers to satisfy themselves with brief, occasional references to this awful topic, when the most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case ?

There has been, in some quarters, what appears to me a miserably fallacious way of talking, which affects to dissuade from dwelling on such terrifying representa-

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stupid indifference to self and every thing besides ? Perhaps any sentient being, the worst existent or possible, *might be* in a situation to move and to justify our sympathy. *What, then, shall we think of that theology which represents the men whom God has made most like himself, as exulting for ever and ever in the most dreadful sufferings of the larger part of those who have been their fellow-inhabitants of this world ?* " — *Mr. Foster's Journal, No.* 494.

tions. They have said, "These terrors tend only to harden the mind; approach the thoughtless beings rather, and almost exclusively, with the milder suasives, the gentle language of love." I cannot, of course, *mean* to say, that this also is not to be one of the expedients and of frequent application. But I do say, that to make this the main resource is not in consistency with the spirit of the Bible, in which the larger proportion of what is said of sinners and addressed to them is plainly in a tone of menace and alarm. Strange if it had been otherwise, when a righteous Governor was speaking to a depraved, rebellious race. Also it is matter of fact and experience, that it is very far oftener by impressions on fear that men are actually awakened to flee from the wrath to come. Let any one recall what he has known of such awakenings. Dr. Watts, all mild and amiable as he was, and delighted to dwell on congenial topics, says, deliberately, that, of all persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious, *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion; all the rest from the awful and alarming ones, — the appeals to fear. And this is all but universally the manner of the Divine process of conversion.

A number (not large, but of *great piety and intelligence*,) of ministers within my acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; * at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general

* See APPENDIX C.

terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point ; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries. When, besides, they have considered how strangely defective and feeble is the efficacy, to alarm and deter careless, irreligious minds, of the terrible doctrine itself notionally admitted by them, they have thought themselves the less required to propound one that so greatly qualifies the blackness of the prospect. They could not be unaware of the grievous truth of what is so strongly insisted on as an argument by the defenders of the tenet, — that thoughtless and wicked men would be sure to seize on the mitigated doctrine to encourage themselves in their impenitence. But this is only the same perverse and fatal use that they make of the doctrine of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. If they *will* so abuse the truth, we cannot help it. But methinks even this fact tells against the doctrine in question. If the very nature of man, as created, every individual, by the sovereign Power, be in such desperate disorder, that there is no possibility of conversion and salvation except in the instances where that power interposes with a special and redeeming efficacy, how can we conceive that the main proportion of the race thus morally impotent (that is, really and absolutely impotent,) will be eternally punished for the in-

evitable result of this moral impotence? But this I have said before.

With all good wishes for the success of your studies and ministrations, I am, dear sir, yours truly,

J. F.

APPENDIX A.

[See Page 18.]

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BELIEVERS IN ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

Three extracts have been thought sufficient; and, that these might not appear far-fetched, they have all been taken from publications of the American Tract Society.

1. From Baxter's "Saints' Rest," (of which 120,000 copies have been printed by the Society.) — "But the greatest aggravation of these torments will be their *eternity*. When a thousand millions of ages are past, they are as fresh to begin as the first day. If there were any hope of an end, it would ease the damned to foresee it; but *For ever* is an intolerable thought! They were never weary of sinning, nor will God be weary of punishing. They never heartily repented of sin, nor will God repent of their suffering. They broke the laws of the eternal God, and therefore shall suffer eternal punishment. They knew it was an everlasting kingdom which they refused, and what wonder if they are everlastingly shut out of it? Their immortal souls were guilty of the trespass, and therefore must immortally suffer the pains. What happy men would they think themselves, if they might have lain still in their graves, or might but there lie down again! How will they call and cry, 'O death,

whither art thou now gone? Now come and cut off this doleful life. O that these pains would break my heart, and end my being! O that I might once at last die! O that I had never had a being!' These groans will the thoughts of eternity wring from their hearts. They were wont to think sermons and prayers long; how long then will they think these endless torments! What difference is there betwixt the length of their pleasures and their pains! The one continued but a moment, the other endureth through all eternity. Sinner, remember how time is almost gone. Thou art standing at the door of eternity; and death is waiting to open the door, and put thee in. Go, sleep out a few more nights, and stir about a few more days on earth, and then thy nights and days shall end: thy thoughts, and cares, and pleasures shall all be devoured by eternity; thou must enter upon the state which shall never be changed. As the joys of heaven are beyond our conception, so are the pains of hell. Everlasting torment is inconceivable torment."

2. From Pike's "Persuasives to Early Piety," (of which 56,000 copies have been printed by the Society.) — "ETERNITY, ETERNITY! this completes the sinner's misery. O young sinner, if once you sink to hell, it will make even hell itself more horrid, to think that you must be for ever there. 'The intolerableness,' says one, 'of your pain and torment will make every day seem an age, and every year as long as eternity; and yet you must lie there an eternity of these long years.' Had a lost soul in hell but the faintest hope of deliverance, though at the end of as many millions of ages as there are drops in the sea, hell would lose half its horrors. But now, alas! eternity, which might have been the measure of their joys, will be the only measure of their torments. There the fire never shall be quenched. *Could a lost soul shed but one tear once in ten thousand years, and do this till a sea as vast as all the seas on earth*

together were filled with tears, all its sufferings in that long, long period, would be but the beginning of eternal misery. All those millions of years of wretchedness would bring the unhappy soul no nearer to an end of its torments than one poor fleeting hour. O infinitely miserable creatures! that, when millions of years of sorrow are past, can only say, 'These flames again, these tortures again'; and when millions more have flown, will still find their miseries beginning, and for ever see an eternity of misery still before them. . . . . Alas for you that ever you were born! for when your future wretchedness has lasted as many millions of miserable years as there are sands on the sea-shore, it will be but beginning; and when it has continued as many more, it will be no nearer ending. A head-ache, or a tooth-ache, or a burning fever for one night, is painful; but what is this to a painful eternity? How slowly go your hours when kept sleepless with pain! how long they seem, while you count hour after hour in sad succession, and wish the morning to appear! but there is no easy morning to follow the night of hell. How slowly will go a sad eternity there, when no hope of an end appears!"

3. From Saurin on "The Eternal Misery of Hell," (Tract No. 277.) — "These are the punishments of condemned souls. It remains only that we consider the LENGTH AND DURATION of them. But can we number the innumerable, and measure that which is beyond mensuration? Can we make you comprehend the incomprehensible? and shall we amuse you with our imaginations?

"For my part, when I endeavour to represent eternity to myself, I avail myself of whatever I conceive most long and durable. I heap imagination on imagination, conjecture on conjecture. First, I consider those long lives which all men wish, and some attain; I observe those old men who lived four or five generations, and who alone make the his-

tory of an age; I do more, — I turn to ancient chronicles, — I go back to the patriarchal age, and consider a life extending through a thousand years; and I say to myself, All this is not eternity, — all this is only a point in comparison of eternity.

"Having represented to myself real objects, I form ideas of imaginary ones; I go from our age to the time of publishing the Gospel; from thence to the publication of the law, — from the law to the flood, — from the flood to the creation; I join this epoch to the present time, and I imagine Adam yet living. Had Adam lived till now, and had he lived in misery, — had he passed all his time in fire, or on a rack, — what idea must we form of his condition? At what price would we agree to expose ourselves to misery so great? What imperial glory would appear glorious, were it followed by so much woe? Yet this is not eternity, — all this is nothing in comparison of eternity.

"I go further still: I proceed from imagination to imagination, from one supposition to another; I take the greatest number of years that can be imagined; I add ages to ages, millions of ages to millions of ages; I form of all these one fixed number, and I stay my imagination. After this, I suppose God to create a world like this which we inhabit: I suppose him creating it, by forming one atom after another, and employing in the production of each atom the time fixed in my calculation just now mentioned. What numberless ages would the creation of such a world in such a manner require! Then I suppose the Creator to arrange these atoms, and to pursue the same plan of arranging them as of creating them. What numberless ages would such an arrangement require! Finally, I suppose him to dissolve and annihilate the whole, and observing the same method in this dissolution as he observed in the creation and disposition of the whole. What an immense

duration would be consumed! Yet this is not eternity, — all this is only a point in comparison of eternity.

"Associate now all these suppositions, and of all these periods make one fixed period; multiply it again, and suppose yourself to pass in multiplying it a time equal to that which the period contains: it is literally and strictly true, all this is not eternity, — all this is only a point in comparison of eternity.

"Ah me! one night passed in a burning fever, or in struggling in the waves of the sea between life and death, appears of immense length! It seems to the sufferer as if the sun had forgot its course, and as if the laws of nature itself were subverted. What then will be the state of those miserable victims of Divine displeasure, who, after they shall have passed through the ages we have been describing, will be obliged to make this overwhelming reflection: All this is only an atom of our misery! What will their despair be, when they shall be forced to say to themselves: Again we must revolve through these enormous periods, — again we must suffer a privation of celestial happiness, — devouring flames again, — cruel remorse again, — crimes and blasphemies over and over again! *For ever! for ever!* Ah! how severe is this word, even in this life! How great is a misfortune, when it is incapable of relief! — how insupportable, when we are obliged to add *for ever* to it! These irons for ever! these chains for ever! this prison for ever! this universal contempt for ever! this domestic trouble for ever! Poor mortals! how short-sighted are you to call sorrows eternal, which end with your lives! What! this life! — this life, that passeth with the rapidity of a *weaver's shuttle!* — this life, which vanisheth *like a sleep!* Is this what you call *for ever?* Ah! absorbing periods of eternity, — accumulated myriads of ages, — these, if I may be allowed to speak so, — these will be FOR EVER *of the damned!*

"I sink under the weight of this subject; and I declare, when I see my friends, my relations, the people of my charge, — when I think that I, that you, that we are all threatened with these torments, — when I see, in the lukewarmness of my devotions, in the languor of my love, in the faintness of my resolutions and designs, the least evidence, though it be only probable or presumptive, of my future misery, that I find in the thought a mortal poison, which diffuses itself into every period of my life, rendering society tiresome, nourishment insipid, pleasure disgustful, and life itself a cruel bitter, — I cease to wonder that *a fear of hell has made some melancholy, and others mad;* that it has inclined some to expose themselves to a living martyrdom by fleeing from all commerce with the rest of mankind, and others to suffer the most violent and terrible torments. But the more terror this idea inspires, the more inexcusable we are, if it produce no good fruits in us. The idea of eternity ought to subvert all our sinful projects. In order to avoid eternal misery, all should be suffered, all surmounted, all undertaken, — sinful self should be crucified, and the whole man devoted in holy sacrifice to God. Let each particle of our bodies become a victim to penitence, — let each moment of life expose us to a new martyrdom; still we should be happy, could we avoid the flaming sword that hangs over our heads, and escape the gulfs of misery which yawn beneath our feet.

"But remember, this life is the only time given to prevent these terrible punishments. After this life, no more exhortations, no more sermons, no more place for repentance.

"And think on the *brevity* of life, — think there may be perhaps only one year granted, perhaps only *one month*, perhaps only ONE DAY, perhaps only ONE HOUR, perhaps only ONE MOMENT, to avoid this misery; so that per-

haps, — O Lord, avert the dreadful supposition! — *perhaps you may this very day experience all these torments.*"

For vivid representations, by the same writers, of the physical intenseness of future sufferings, see pp. 76 – 82. We cannot, I think, but regard these writers, even if we may differ from them in opinion, as sincere Christians and excellent men; and believe that they would rejoice as truly as any to find, in another state of being, that the benevolence of God is larger than their limited measure. The exception which Foster, in his letter to Dr. Ryland, makes in favor of Baxter, will also, I trust, apply to the other two: — "I should be very reluctant to appear conspicuously in the class of what have been denominated 'damnation writers.' With the exception of Baxter and a few more, I am afraid that those who have expatiated most on infernal subjects have *felt them the least.* A predilection for such subjects, and a calm, deliberate, minute exhibition of them, always strike me as a kind of *Christian cruelty*, the spirit of an *auto-da-fé.* I sincerely doubt the utility of a laborious, expanded display of the horrors of hell: as far as I have had the means of observing the actual effect, I have found it far the greatest where one would anxiously wish it might not exist at all, — in the minds of the timid, scrupulous, and melancholic."

APPENDIX B.

EXTRACT FROM MR. FOSTER'S LETTER TO THE REV. DR. HARRIS, DATED SEPTEMBER 12, 1842.

[See Page 23.]

"I hope, indeed may assume, that you are of a cheerful temperament; but are you not sometimes invaded by the darkest visions and reflections while casting your view over

the scene of human existence, from the beginning to this hour? To me it appears a most mysteriously awful economy, overspread by a lurid and dreadful shade. I pray for the piety to maintain an humble submission of thought and feeling to the wise and righteous Disposer of all existence. But to see a nature created in purity, qualified for perfect and endless felicity, but ruined at the very origin, by a disaster devolving fatally on all the race, — to see it in an early age of the world estranged from truth, from the love and fear of its Creator, from that, therefore, without which existence is a thing to be deplored, — abandoned to all evil, till swept away by a deluge, — the renovated race revolving into idolatry and iniquity, and spreading downward through ages in darkness, wickedness, and misery, — no Divine dispensation to enlighten and reclaim it, except for one small section, and that section itself a no less flagrant proof of the desperate corruption of the nature, — the ultimate, grand remedial visitation, Christianity, laboring in a difficult progress and very limited extension, and soon perverted from its purpose into darkness and superstition, for a period of a thousand years, — at the present hour known and even nominally acknowledged by very greatly the minority of the race, the mighty mass remaining prostrate under the infernal dominion, of which countless generations of their ancestors have been the slaves and victims, — a deplorable majority of the people in the Christian nations strangers to the vital power of Christianity, and a large proportion directly hostile to it, and even the institutions pretended to be for its support and promotion being baneful to its virtue, — its progress in the work of conversion, in even the most favored part of the world, *distanced* by the progressive increase of the population, so that, even there, (but to a fearful extent if we take the world at large,) the disproportion of the faithful to the irreligious is continually increasing, — the

sum of all these melancholy facts being, that thousands of millions have passed, and thousands every day are passing, out of the world, in no state of fitness for a pure and happy state elsewhere, — O, it is a most confounding and appalling contemplation!

"And it would be a *transcendently direful* one, if I believed the doctrine of the eternity of future misery. It amazes me to imagine how thoughtful and benevolent men, believing that doctrine, can endure the sight of the present world and the history of the past. To behold successive, innumerable crowds carried on in the mighty impulse of a depraved nature, which they are impotent to reverse, and to which it is not the will of God in his sovereignty to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom, — to see them passing through a short term of mortal existence (absurdly sometimes denominated a *probation*) under all the world's pernicious influences, with the addition of the malign and deadly one of the great tempter and destroyer to confirm and augment the inherent depravity, on their speedy passage to everlasting woe, — I repeat, I am, without pretending to any extraordinary depth of feeling, amazed to conceive what they contrive to do with their sensibility, and in what manner they maintain a firm assurance of the Divine goodness and justice. *Yet I see numbers of these good men preserving, apparently without great effort, a tone of equanimity, sometimes excited to hilarity, while everywhere closely surrounded by creatures whom, as not being the subjects of Divine grace, they deliberately regard as the* DESTINED VICTIMS OF ETERNAL FIRE; *and must regard as if created on purpose, that, by passing a few fleeting, sinful moments here, they might be prepared for it.*

"I meet with a few intelligent and pious men who join in the disbelief; and suspect that, unavowedly, many others

are repelled into strong doubt, at the least, by the INFINITE HORROR OF THE TENET.

"Here again I am reminded how the missionary advocates make of all this just a charge against the Church, the religious section, as having been in effect owing to *them;* as if they had a certain power and responsibility, and had it now, to reverse substantially this awful destiny. But the Supreme Sovereign's scheme and economy for the race was formed in no dependence on what the more privileged section might attempt, or not attempt, for them; — formed, indeed, in a perfect foresight of what would *not* be attempted. How plain is it, that the case has its reason and its mystery in something far deeper than any consideration of what they might have done, and neglected to do! How self-evident the proposition, that if the Sovereign Arbiter had INTENDED the salvation of the race, it must have been accomplished!"

NOTE BY DR. HARRIS.

"Mr. Foster has here advanced within the awful shadow of a subject which seems partially to have obscured his perception of the ultimate ground of moral responsibility. There is reason to believe that *the Divine standard of man's accountability is a scale of all but unlimited graduation.* While, therefore, it would be absurd to suppose that 'the men of Sodom and Gomorrah' will be judged by the same scale as the men of 'Capernaum,' would it not be almost as absurd to infer that, on that account, they will be judged by no scale whatever? 'They who have sinned without (a written) law shall be judged without law.' Destitute of a written law, they are still within the jurisdiction of natural law. Of this class let the most uncivilized tribe be selected: still its members will be found to be held answerable to, and by, each other. Of this tribe let the last wandering survivor be taken; and it will be found that he is still, in many re-

spects, 'a law unto himself.' The elements of responsibility are within him. His moral constitution, not his external advantages, renders him amenable to law. He is a man, and therefore he will be judged. He is a man whose moral nature has been exposed to the most debasing and depraving influences, and therefore he will be judged accordingly.

"It may not be irrelevant to add, first, that as, among such portions of the human race, the period of intellectual infancy lasts much longer than it does among more cultivated classes, there is high probability for concluding that *the state of accountability is not reached till a comparatively advanced period of youth.* Secondly, it may be worth consideration whether, while *we* shall be reckoned with as to *how much we have advanced in holiness considering our advantages*, there may not be many who will be reckoned with as to *how little they have retrograded in evil considering their disadvantages.* I would not for a moment be supposed to contravene the everlasting principle, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' But, believing that there is a class of cases in which a struggle is maintained against moral determination, which, though unsuccessful in the best sense, involves a greater amount of resistance to evil than is made by some who yet advance in excellence, it is to be supposed that such resistance will be taken into the account, however unavailing it may be in the highest respect. And, thirdly, is not the doctrine of future punishment rendered gratuitously startling, when viewed in relation to the classes described by Mr. Foster, by the too positive, equalizing, and objective views generally entertained respecting the *place* of punishment. In opposition to Scripture, the too general impression is, that there will be the same punishment for all the lost. And this, indeed, would follow necessarily, if, as it is too commonly supposed, the punishment depends almost entirely on the place, and if there is

one place for all. But this would be to confound all gradations of evil character; and so far to make a mockery of that future judgment which is supposed to be designed to distinguish between them. I do not believe, indeed, that 'the mind will be its own place,' literally; that is, that there will be no objective. But I do believe that every man will 'go to his own place,' and that this place will be the exact counterpart of his moral character. So that, while some will be 'beaten with many stripes,' we believe that *for the minimum of guilt there will be a minimum of punishment.**

"J. H."

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* Compare the views of the celebrated Dr. Paley (whose works have been and still are so extensively used as text-books in our colleges and schools, and whose Natural Theology has been lately republished by the American Tract Society, with the testimony from a clergyman, that, ever since reading the work, he had been "a happier man, and delighted more in the happiness of all the creatures of God"), as expressed in his Moral Philosophy, Book I., Ch. 7:—"It seems most agreeable to our conceptions of justice, and is consonant enough to the language of Scripture, to suppose, that there are prepared for us rewards and punishments, of all possible degrees, from the most exalted happiness down to extreme misery; so that 'our labor is never in vain'; whatever advancement we make in virtue, we procure a proportionable accession of future happiness; as, on the other hand, every accumulation of vice is the 'treasuring up of so much wrath against the day of wrath.' It has been said, that it can never be a just economy of Providence, to admit one part of mankind into heaven, and condemn the other to hell, since there must be very little to choose, between the worst man who is received into heaven, and the best who is excluded. *And how know we,* it might be answered, *but that there may be as little to choose in their conditions?*"

With these milder views of Drs. Harris and Paley, contrast the terrific representations on pages 71 – 82.

APPENDIX C.

[See Page 28.]

EXTRACTS FROM WRITERS SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT, SHOWING TO WHAT AN EXTENT A DISBELIEF IN THAT DOCTRINE PREVAILS IN GREAT BRITAIN, GERMANY, AND OUR OWN COUNTRY.

1. From a Review of "Festus" in the New York Evangelist, by the Rev. Dr. Cheever.*

"The favor which this poem has met with in England may be accounted for, we think, at least in some measure, by the prevalence of a secret pantheistic, universalistic tendency, even in quarters where such a thing might least be expected. We know, from conversation with gentlemen in old England, that, *even among the more evangelical portion of believers there, it is rare to find such an unhesitating reception and credit of the word of God, in regard to the future punishment of the wicked*, as has prevailed in New England, and as constitutes the basis of all true theology, of all profound and vigorous theological science. The secret unsettledness of many minds in regard to the great fundamental doctrine of a future endless retribution, and the prevailing doubts as to the nature or existence of retributive justice, would prepare the way for the reception of such a bold, vast, unhesitating system of universal necessity, and universal salvation, and universal confusion between good and evil, as is contained in this poem."

2. From an Article on "John Foster and his Reviewers," by Rev. D. W. Phillips, in the Christian Review, January, 1849.

"There were some *orthodox divines* with whom he

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* For the extracts from the New York Evangelist, and from the Rev. Dr. Sears, the Editor is indebted to a work by the Rev. L. C. Browne.

[Foster] associated, who did not believe in eternal punishment. *The unbelief may be more extensive than we are apt to think.* The doctrine of eternal punishment was vigorously opposed in the meeting of the Christian Alliance."

3. From the New York Evangelist, December 17, 1846.

"The recent Convention in London, for the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, has had one incidental effect which was not contemplated by those who were active in getting up that movement. It has unveiled the fact before the world, and especially it has fixed the attention of the American churches upon the fact, that *the so-called evangelical religion of England, and of Europe, is infected, to an alarming extent, with a tendency to Universalism.* The 'doctrinal basis' of the Evangelical Alliance, as drawn up by those who had the management of the undertaking in their hands from the outset, — the formula which was to be the only manifestation or visible bond of union, — contained not only no assertion of the 'everlasting life' and the 'everlasting punishment,' which are the opposite destinies of God's children and of his enemies, but no recognition of the soul as immortal, or of any future state.

"On this side of the Atlantic, many at first regarded the omission as unintentional, a mere oversight, — though such an oversight seemed hardly possible in forming even the most compendious summary of that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. Others who had visited Great Britain, and who knew more fully and exactly the state of religious opinions there, and the Antinomian tendencies to which those who there make profession of the evangelical faith are specially liable, knew that the omission was intentional, and that the design of it must have been to include in the Alliance any — even the utmost — latitude of unbelief respecting the Bible doctrine of future punishment.

"Accordingly, this omission was discussed, and was distinctly pronounced upon in a meeting which was held last May, in this city. Brethren of some eight or ten different denominations had come together for consultation, in reference to the Convention which had been called to meet in London. Several of them were intending to be members of that Convention. All of them had taken a hearty interest in the proposal. When the 'doctrinal basis,' upon which the Convention was called, was read, that the meeting might see who were invited, and might express their assent to it if it met their approbation, the question was raised, Does this Alliance propose to include Universalists? Somc answered unequivocally in the negative, and insisted that the omission ought to be considered as merely accidental. But others, and particularly Drs. Cox and Patton, whose intercourse with brethren on the other side of the ocean had made them better acquainted with opinions and tendencies there, were confident that the omission was nothing less than a deliberate concession to an unsound, sentimentalizing mode of reasoning, which, affecting to be wiser than the Scriptures, denies that Christ is to be understood as meaning what he says when he speaks, with so terrible an emphasis, of 'everlasting punishment.' The meeting, with entire unanimity, gave only a qualified assent to the 'basis,' and expressed their deep conviction of the necessity of amending it in this important particular.

"The correctness of those apprehensions was made manifest when the Convention assembled. We need not here recite the particulars which showed to how great an extent an unsound and dangerous method of theologizing, in respect to the awards of the final judgment, has found place among our brethren on that sidc of the Atlantic. When the authentic report of the debates and proceedings shall have been given to the public, more will probably be known, on

this subject, than is now known by any of us who were not present in the Convention. But enough is already known to make it highly probable that the original omission in the 'doctrinal basis' would have remained; and that the Alliance, while excluding such men as Whitefield and John H. Rice, would have opened its doors wide for the admission of such as Winchester and Murray, had not 'the American brethren,' with their Bible theology, and their sturdy arguments, constrained the Convention to see things in another light, and to shape their course accordingly. Had the brethren who went from this country done nothing else than to argue that question in the Convention, their mission would not have been in vain. We trust that the impression of the danger of attempting to be wiser than the Scriptures, in regard to the retributions of eternity, will remain upon the minds of all that were in the Convention, and will ultimately produce its legitimate effects upon the preachers, and the theology, and the religious literature of our English brethren.

"The publication of the Memoirs and Correspondence of John Foster is another painful illustration of the tendency which showed itself so distinctly in the proceedings preparatory to the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. Foster, it is true, was very little of a theologian, and never very eminent as a preacher; but he was a great man, — and a man whose religious character, though it had some marked imperfections, was, we doubt not, an essentially Christian character. He was in some respects the pride of the English Dissenters, and, as a writer, he has had, and will continue to have, a commanding influence, not indeed directly over the masses of the religious public, but over those minds that influence and guide the masses. And yet Foster appears to have held, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, a doctrine on the subject of future retributions not only un-

warranted by Scripture, but directly contradicting the testimony of Scripture. He does not appear to have practised any concealment on the subject, — indeed, concealment of his views, or even of his conjectures, on such a subject, would have been foreign to his nature. And yet it does not appear that Foster's standing or influence was at all affected by his views on that subject. Nor does it seem that the editor of his Correspondence had any suspicion that this great man's posthumous fame and usefulness would be at all impaired by the publication of his elaborate argument against the testimonies of the Scriptures. All this seems to us to indicate a tendency among the English Evangelical Dissenters, which may well alarm a thoughtful mind.

"In this point of view, we cannot but regret the extent to which the popular religious literature of this country is made up of reprints from the popular religious literature of England. In proportion as the current of literature of the religious public in England is infected with that sentimentalizing theology, our own community will be likely to receive the infection. Our formularies and doctrinal standards in the various churches may be full of sound doctrine; our theological seminaries may be strictly orthodox; even the pulpit may be faithful to its trust; while a mischievous infection of false doctrine, brought over in memoirs and essays, in religious novels and evangelical poems, is spreading itself among the people, unsuspected.

"Our theology has been in a great degree independent of English theology ever since the days of Edwards, and is continually becoming more so. Our popular religious literature ought to be equally our own. We may hope that the time is not far distant when it will be."

4. From Communications of the Rev. Barnas Sears, D. D., recently Professor in the Baptist Theological Seminary at Newton, and now Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

"But the most painful disclosures remain yet to be made.

Though, as a theologian, Dr. Tholuck is on the side of orthodoxy, it must be remembered that it is the orthodoxy of Germany. I feel the more called upon to state frankly what I know to be the truth, from the fact that the works of several German critics, of whom he is the safest, have now become so popular in England and America, as to demand a translation. *This distinguished and excellent man, in common with the great majority of the evangelical divines in Germany*, though he professes to have serious doubts, and is cautious in avowing the sentiment, *believes that all men and fallen spirits will finally be saved.* The current hypothesis is, that, in the middle state intervening between death and the resurrection, the righteous will gradually attain to perfection, and that, to all the wicked, whether men or angels, the Gospel will be preached, and that they will ultimately accept it and be restored."

"Professor Olshausen is the most popular commentator on the New Testament of the modern evangelical school. Let us hear what he says on this subject. In the new edition of 1833, vol. i., p. 412, he observes that 'there have been many Universalists in all ages, but *there are more in this age than there ever were before.* Although this *may often be owing* to a sickly and torpid state of the moral feelings, *yet it is without doubt deeply rooted in noble minds;* it is the longing of the soul after complete harmony in the universe.'"

"But we have not yet done: we have still to add, that, with Dr. Tholuck, who has in London more than once made public speeches in English, we have often discussed this subject *in English.* Does our traveller boast of superiority also here? One evening, at his house, there was a debate between us on this subject, in the presence of two American gentlemen, now in this country. It made such a painful im-

pression on the mind of the writer, that he can remember not only the ideas, but many of the identical words and phrases, employed at the time. The following is the substance of that conversation, which was held *in English:* —

" *Tholuck.* I suppose my American brethren would consider me orthodox in general, except in my Universalism.

" *S.* They would, most certainly. But with them that one point would be a serious matter. With this sentiment you could not hold a standing in our orthodox churches. Now, where did you find this doctrine, — in the Bible, or in your philosophy?

" *Tholuck.* In both.

" *S.* What are the passages of Scripture on which you principally rely?

" *Tholuck.* My main passage is 1 Cor. xv. 28: Christ shall overcome all, and bring them into complete subjection to God, who to all men will be their all, their every thing. Such language cannot well be applied to those who shall still remain his enemies. Also Rom. xi. 36: For out of him, and through him, and into him, are all things; that is, all things proceed out of him as the source of being; by him they are conducted to their proper destination; and into him they all return, as their eternal resting-place. It follows, of course, that they will all be happy, for happiness consists in being *in* God. Another passage, is, ' Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess,' &c.

" *S.* Do you find no passages of Scripture which positively declare the everlasting punishment of the wicked?

" *Tholuck.* Yes: Matt. xxv. 46, and others like it.

" *S.* Can those passages, which you think favor Universalism, be understood in any other sense without violating the fundamental laws of interpretation?

" *Tholuck.* Yes, they *can*, but the construction would not be so easy and natural.

"*S.* Can the other passages, which speak of endless punishment, *possibly* bear any other construction?

"*Tholuck.* I do not see how they can.

"*S.* Well, what are you going to do with them?

"*Tholuck.* That is my only difficulty. These two classes of texts seem to me contradictory; I cannot reconcile them. But when I reflect upon the character of God, as a Being of *love*, I lose all my doubts. Those passages are dark, but here all is light. Man has not utterly lost God's image; there is something holy in him still, — the flaming eye of God, the conscience; and wherever there is this foothold, God will gain the heart at last. Were it not for this traitor in the enemy's camp, it would be impossible for God to save sinners.

"*S.* Americans do not use the word *holy* in such a connection. We do not apply it to one's *essential nature*, which cannot be changed, but to *moral character*, which is susceptible of change. To say that man has a conscience, is only to say that he is a man. This is what, in the nature of things, can never be lost. Devils have consciences, and are moral agents, as much as men; and if there is something holy where there is conscience, there is something holy in devils, and there is this foothold for God, this traitor in the camp, there, and consequently they also can, and will, be saved.

"*Tholuck.* To be sure: this is what I hold."

5. From "Travels in the North of Germany, in the years 1825 and 1826, by Henry E. Dwight, A. M.," (son of the distinguished President Dwight.)

"The doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is almost universally rejected. *I have seen but one person in Germany who believed it, and but one other whose mind was wavering on this subject.* Many of them acknowledge that the New Testament seems to inculcate this doctrine; but they find it, as they say, so irreconcilable with our ideas

of the infinitely benevolent Being, whom God has revealed himself to be, that, if they believe in his perfections, they must reject the doctrine. Some contend that it is not even apparently announced. To those texts which are generally believed with us to involve it, they give a different explanation in their interpretation; finding, as they believe, philological difficulties in the way. . . . . Others affirm, as one of the orthodox professors, who is considered to be eminent for his piety, told me respecting himself, that this doctrine evidently appears in the New Testament, but that his heart could not receive it, unless he were to change his views of the character of God; that we now enjoy but a single ray of revelation in comparison with the light which will burst upon our view in the future world; and that, when we come to behold the glory of God, as it will there be revealed to us, he believed that this apparent difficulty in his moral government would be explained." — p. 421.

"Some of those with whom I have conversed appear to be eminent for their piety. I have never seen any Christians, who seemed to me to have a deeper sense of the odiousness of sin in the sight of God, or whose hearts beat with more ardent gratitude for our Saviour, for the great redemption he has made for fallen man. I know of no examples of humility greater than those of some of these gentlemen, or more elevated views of the character of God than you discover in their conversation. So far as an opinion can be formed of them from their reputation, and from their conversation, *we must look in vain for brighter examples of piety than they exhibit.* They certainly manifest a greater spirit of love for those who differ from them than is found in most of our sects, and they feel very unwilling *to shut the gates of heaven against those who do not believe every article of their creed.* In this charity and love, the Chris-

tians of most Protestant countries would do well to imitate them." — p. 423.

"They [the orthodox clergymen of Germany] rarely preach in such a manner as to alarm their hearers, believing that it is much the wiser course to allure men to truth and holiness by exhibitions of the mercy of God, rather than by preaching the terrors of the law." — p. 424.

6. From an Editorial article in the "Independent," (edited by Rev. L. Bacon, D. D., Rev. J. P. Thompson, and Rev. R. S. Storrs, Jr.,) March 22, 1849.

"There is a considerable class of intelligent preachers, some in our own country and more in Great Britain and Germany, who either totally reject the doctrine of the future and eternal punishment for the wicked, or who modify it and explain it away, or who are too much in doubt of it to use it in their preaching with any confidence. These are men far superior, both in intelligence and in moral character, to the common advocates of the doctrine of universal salvation. They do not wish to be classed with that distinctive school. Perhaps, like John Foster, they have been accustomed to refer the depravity of man wholly to the Divine constitution of things in this world; to look upon the race as having been brought into existence, by the sovereign will of God, 'in such a condition that they certainly will and *must*, by their nature and circumstances, go wrong, unless prevented by special grace,' and as being 'carried on in the mighty impulse of a depraved nature, which they are *impotent to reverse*, and to which it is not the will of God in his sovereignty to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom'; and with such views of human depravity and of Divine sovereignty, they have found it, as did Foster, impossible to reconcile 'the doctrine of the eternity of future misery, either with their own moral sense, or with the Divine goodness and justice.'

"Or, like the disciples of a widely different school, they entertain such loose notions of the moral government of God, of the nature and extent of the moral law, and of the tendency and demerit of sin, that they cannot reconcile with their effeminate and sentimental conception of the Deity the idea of the eternal misery of any of his creatures. Thus do these wide extremes meet in the same conclusion.

"But while these philosophers from such opposite premises conclude against the doctrine of eternal punishment, not a few of them have the candor to acknowledge that the Scriptures *seem* to teach it; that if it cannot be proved, neither can it be disproved, from the Bible, and therefore, say they, it is *expedient* to preach it as a salutary restraint upon wicked men.

"But such a reason for preaching a doctrine inwardly questioned or rejected is as discreditable to the sagacity of those who render it, as it is dishonorable to God. What 'salutary restraint' will the doctrine have over wicked men, when once it is known or suspected that it is preached only for such a reason? Or with what sincerity, with what assurance, with what earnestness, can a man *preach a doctrine which he does not believe, merely for the sake of working upon the superstitious fears of others*?

"Such a preacher of future retribution reminds one of the exhibitor of the 'Conflagration of Moscow,' who, having wrought upon the nerves of delicate females and children by the vividness and accuracy of the representation, the explosion of mines, the booming of cannon, the flaming houses, and the flying crowds, just as the final catastrophe — the blowing up of the Kremlin — spreads consternation among the juvenile spectators and calls forth screams of terror, steps forward with his politest bow, and assures the audience that it is nothing but *a very little box of powder.*"

7. From an article on "Future Punishment, as exhibited in the Book of Enoch," in the Biblical Repository, July, 1840, by Rev. Moses Stuart,* Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological Seminary, Andover.

"In respect to the other class [of Universalists], or *Restorationists*, justice would require some change of tone and representation. There are indeed among them men of like temperament and demeanour with those already characterized. But there are not a few of a different character, and whose doubts and difficulties are entitled to kind and respectful consideration. *Not a few persons in our community secretly belong to this class.* They perceive the extravagant and obtrusive assumptions of those who deny any future punishment; and fearing to encourage them in their error, they withhold the expression of their own doubts and difficulties, guarding themselves at the same time from expressing and inculcating any positive belief in the doctrine of endless punishment. Thus *they live, and perhaps die, without ever making any explicit avowal of their secret belief*, or, at least, of their secret doubts. *And among these are not a few of the professed preachers of the Gospel.*

"It were easy to prefer accusations, in this case, of insincerity and the want of open and honest dealing; and this is sometimes done. To such accusations, indeed, there are some who would be justly subjected. But I am not persuaded that all doubters of this class are to be taxed with hypocrisy and double dealing. *There are minds of a very serious cast, and prone to reasoning and inquiry, that have in some way come into such a state, that doubt on the subject*

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* On whom the degree of D. D. has been more than once most appropriately conferred, and who has gained more honor by refusing, in obedience to the Saviour's precept, than he could have gained by wearing, the "semilunar fardels." It has been recently stated, that no fewer than sixty of these so often unmeaning patents of clerical nobility were issued by our colleges during the last year.

of ENDLESS *punishment cannot, without the greatest difficulty, be removed from them.*

"They commence their doubts, it is probable, with some *a priori* reasoning on this subject. 'God is good. His tender mercy is over all the work of his hands. He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner. He has *power* to prevent it. He knew, before he created man, and made him a free agent, that he would sin. In certain prospect of his endless misery, therefore, his benevolence would have prevented the bringing of him into existence. No father can bear to see his own children miserable without end, not even when they have been ungrateful and rebellious; and God, our Heavenly Father, loves us better than any earthly parent does or can love his children.

"'Besides, our sins are temporary and finite; for they are committed by temporary and finite beings, and in a world filled with enticements both from without and from within. It is perfectly easy for Omnipotence to limit, yea, to prevent, any mischief which sin can do; so that the endless punishment of the wicked is unnecessary, in order to maintain the Divine government, and keep it upon a solid basis. Above all, a punishment *without end*, for the sins of a few days or hours, is a proportion of misery incompatible with justice as well as mercy. And how can this be any longer necessary, when Christ has made atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting redemption from its penalty?'

"The social sympathies, too, of some men, are often deeply concerned with the formation of their religious opinions. They have lost a near and dear friend and relative by death; one who never made any profession of religion, or gave good reason to suppose that his mind was particularly occupied with it. 'What shall they think of his case? Can they believe that one so dear to them has become eternally wretched, — an outcast for ever from God? Can they en-

dure the thought that they are never to see or associate with him any more? *Can heaven itself be a place of happiness for them, while they are conscious that a husband or a wife, a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, is plunged into a lake of fire from which there is no escape?* It is impossible,' they aver, 'to overcome such sympathies as these. It would be unnatural and even *monstrous* to suppress them. They are, therefore, as they view the case, *constrained* to doubt whether the miseries of a future world can be endless.'

"If there are any whose breasts are strangers to such difficulties as these, they are to be congratulated on having made attainments almost beyond the reach of humanity in the present world; or else to be pitied for ignorance, or the want of a sympathy which seems to be among the first elements of our social nature. With the great mass of thinking Christians, I am sure such thoughts as these must, unhappily for them, be *acquaintances too familiar.* That they *agitate our breasts as storms do the mighty deep*, will be testified by every man of a tender heart, and who has a deep concern in the present and future welfare of those whom he loves.

"It would seem to be from such considerations, and the like to these, that a belief in the *future* repentance and recovery of sinners has become so wide-spread in Germany, pervading even the ranks of those who are regarded as serious and evangelical men in respect to most or all of what is called orthodox doctrine, saving the point before us. Such was the case, also, with some of the ancient fathers;* and

* However it may be explained, it is a striking fact, that neither the Apostles' Creed, nor the Nicene, nor yet the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church express any belief in future misery, although they distinctly express a belief in future happiness. The Apostles' Creed closes thus:—"I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen."

such is doubtless the case with not a few of our day, who are far removed from noisy and obtrusive sectarianism, and who even do not venture *positively to assert and maintain* the modified doctrine of universal salvation, namely, the *final* restoration of all to Divine favor, after punishment and repentance.

"Can we find it in our hearts severely to reproach doubters of this retired and modest class, who will not even venture to assert what they hope is true, and, on the whole, do believe to be true, for fear it may not after all prove to be so, and then the assertion of the doctrine might lead others to ruin? No, we should not so demean ourselves in respect to serious and also anxious and distressed minds, filled with doubts, which they have yet found no adequate grounds to satisfy. Their state of mind *may be wrong*. I must believe that it *is*. But theirs is an error of quite a different character from that of an obtrusive and contumacious renunciation of all belief in any future retribution."

TO THE

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

OF THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

ESPECIALLY TO THE

Rev. John Knox, D. D.,
Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D.,
Rev. Charles G. Sommers,
Rev. James W. Alexander, D. D.,
Rev. John S. Stone, D. D., and
Rev. Erskine Mason, D. D.,

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

Brethren, — Allow one who has for years regarded with deep interest the operations of your Society, and hoped for great good from them to our country and the world, — who has from time to time contributed his mite directly to your treasury, and who has been in the constant habit of purchasing your publications for distribution, — respectfully to ask your consideration of a few questions, which have been impressed with great force upon his own mind during a recent examination of some of your publications. This examination occurred to him, he scarcely knows how, in the course of editing the preceding letter of Mr. Foster; and he must acknowledge that some of the results have produced as much surprise in his own mind as he must believe that they will in the minds of many others, even of those

who, for a long time, have had, like himself, a general acquaintance with the proceedings and publications of your Society.

I. *Does not the peculiar claim which the Society puts forth to the confidence of the religious community, impose upon it peculiar responsibility in respect to the character of its publications?*

The nature and grounds of this claim will be seen from the following extracts,* which have been taken from a Circular addressed in 1848 "to the Evangelical Ministers and Churches in the United States coöperating with the American Tract Society," from the latest descriptive List of its Books which I have seen, and from that beautiful Annual for 1849, which the Society has issued under the humble name of an "Almanac."

"The thought cannot be too deeply impressed upon every friend of this cause, that the publications circulated by the Society are of *a very high character* — the choicest productions of Baxter and Bunyan, Doddridge and Venn, Fuller and Legh Richmond, of the old world; and Edwards and Payson, Nelson and Nevins, of our own country — men of different evangelical denominations, of powerful minds and devoted piety, whose writings have enlightened and blessed the world, and will be read, and revered, and loved, down to the end of time. Nor are the smaller Tracts, issued by the Society, less valuable, less ably written, or less adapted to do good, than the more permanent volumes; affording, in every form of interest and variety of illustration, the richest instruction to the old

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* In the extracts which precede, the Editor has himself italicized some words for the purpose of calling attention to them; but in those which follow, he designs to adhere scrupulously to the very style of printing which he finds, in order to avoid all danger of misrepresenting the Society's publications, even in respect to emphasis. Indeed, to save trouble and secure accuracy, the most of these extracts have been *set up*, to use the language of the printing-office, *from printed copy*.

and the young, the rich and the poor, the parent and the child, the pastor and his flock; and while many of them are so short that they may be read in moments of leisure, and by many not accustomed to read larger works, it is the design of the Society that no Tract shall go forth which does not contain enough of practical Gospel truth to lead the sinner to Christ, if he should never have another warning.

"A characteristic excellence of these works, of paramount importance, is, that they contain *the great distinguishing principles of evangelical truth*, free from denominational peculiarities — those principles which constitute our common Christianity — in which good men of different names agree, and which are adapted to convert and sanctify the soul. The Society having a Publishing Committee of different denominations to select and publish such works, the delightful fact has been fully demonstrated, by more than twenty years' experience of this Institution, that Christians of different names are one — one in feeling — one in aim — one in effort, in advancing the great interests of Christ's kingdom; and that they need only to come together to labor for God and the salvation of men, in order to draw forth the world's reluctant commendation, 'See how these brethren love one another.' The Society sustaining this truly catholic character, its officers, agents, colporteurs, and supporters, are connected with thirteen different denominations; and the excellence of its publications, the neatness of their dress, and the benevolence of the object — giving to the poor, and selling to others at prices so low that the total sales yield no profit to the treasury — have together contributed to secure their circulation in every part of our American community.

"The Society have already issued more than one hundred millions of books and Tracts — of Alleine's Alarm, 120,000 copies; Baxter's Saints' Rest, and Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion, each 100,000; of Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, 250,000; and in some efforts of late to supply our large cities, 10,000 volumes were circulated in Boston, 10,000 in Charleston, S. C., 17,000 in Philadelphia and vicinity; and in other cities and large towns of the United States, they have been circulated on a somewhat similar scale — showing the estimation in which these works are held by those who are qualified to judge of their real excellence.

"While the world is full of books *nominally religious*, and often of doubtful or dangerous character, is it not a matter of great importance that the Christian community can feel assured, that wherever they see a book published by the American Tract Society, that work has passed the revision of a judicious Committee, and is worthy of all confidence? When it is remembered that God has been pleased to place the seal of his special approbation upon these works, and that some of them have evidently been the means of the conversion of hundreds of souls, who can estimate the amount of good done by this Society in the circulation of a hundred millions of publications — all breathing the spirit of civil and religious liberty; all inculcating the purest morality; and all enforcing the great doctrines and principles of evangelical religion?" — *Circular*, p. 2.

"The standard religious books in the following alphabetical list are published and circulated with the sole object of increasing vital piety.

"The prices — which are the same in all parts of the United States — are arranged on the principle of merely receiving back by the sales the amount expended in printing and circulating such as are sold, without profit to the Society's treasury by issuing them.

"The style of printing and binding is unsurpassed for beauty and strength, the backs in cloth being lined and strong as ordinary sheep; and the books illustrated by engravings, including many for children and youth, are in the best style of the art.

"These works are selected by a Committee consisting of members of six different evangelical denominations, and are the result of more than twenty years of careful examination of the practical religious literature of the present and preceding centuries. They teach the great doctrines and duties of the Bible, without reference to denominational distinctions.

"It is believed that no similar collection of evangelical writings can exceed them in purity of doctrine, simplicity of style, or in practical usefulness. Some of them have been translated into many different languages, and of some of them the Society has put in circulation hundreds of thousands of copies.

"The best evidence of the usefulness of this series is furnished

in the fact that the Holy Spirit has honored some of them for more than two centuries as a means of salvation to thousands of souls. The Society's Annual Reports, and American Messenger, contain a multitude of facts, showing the spiritual benefit derived from the perusal of the various volumes. They may be placed beside the Bible in every household, with the assurance that they will sustain its teachings and illustrate and enforce its truths, under the blessing of the Spirit, to the salvation of the soul.

"The wide circulation given to these publications in the most intelligent and discriminating communities, is an evidence of their inestimable value. In Boston nearly 200 gentlemen circulated by voluntary effort about 10,000 volumes on sale, for which they received $3.500. In Hartford and New Haven, Conn., about 4,000 volumes each were circulated. In Providence, R. I., nearly 10,000 volumes were sold; in Troy, N. Y., 7,000 volumes; in Philadelphia, 18,000 volumes; in Charleston, S. C., 10,000 volumes, including 400 sets of the Evangelical Family Library, amounting to $3,000; and in Savannah and Augusta, Ga., nearly 4,000 volumes each.

"More than two hundred pious colporteurs are employed by the Society in conveying these publications to the homes of the people. They have no pecuniary interest in their circulation. The Committee would commend them and the books they bear to the confidence of all the friends of moral and religious truth."—*List*, p. 1.

"These works are not exceeded in high evangelical character, spiritual power, and practical worth, by any similar collection in any language. They have been carefully selected for the great body of intelligent readers throughout the country, and the most watchful parent may supply them to his family or to others, not only with safety to their best and eternal interests, but with hope of the richest spiritual blessings."—*Almanac*, p. 59.

Observe how numerous and how extraordinary are the claims which are here urged to "all confidence." This becomes even the more striking, if we attempt to make a summary of them. We have,—

1. The union of "thirteen different denominations" in supporting the Society.

2. The "revision" of all its publications by a "judicious Committee," "consisting of members of six different evangelical denominations." The personal reputation of the six gentlemen, all clergymen, who now compose the Publishing Committee, certainly adds much force to this claim.

3. The approbation of the public, as attested by "the wide circulation given to these publications in the most intelligent and discriminating communities," by the voluntary efforts which gentlemen have made to circulate them, and by their immense total issue of "more than one hundred millions."

4. The additional attestation to their merit, that "some of them have been translated into many different languages."

5. The high reputation of the authors of many of these works, both "of the old world" and "of our own country — men of different evangelical denominations, of powerful minds and devoted piety, whose writings have enlightened and blessed the world, and will be read, and revered, and loved, down to the end of time." *

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* Considering how many excellent books have been written, read, lauded, and forgotten, is it quite safe to assert this, unless perchance the Society has obtained some more certain information respecting "the end of time" than even the Millerites now claim? For, in one of their recent tracts, the Rev. Mr. Himes, than whom there can be no better authority for their views, thus answers the question, *What do the Adventists preach now on the time?* "We can take no very definite ground on exact time, with our present light. The events are in the future, and may, so far as we can determine, speedily break upon us."

6. The beautiful style in which these works are illustrated, printed, and bound. Here, certainly, the Society is worthy of all praise, and its example may be commended to universal imitation.

7. The "benevolence" of the "sole object" of the Society, that "of increasing vital piety"; and its entire freedom from interested motives in the sale of its publications.

8. Its "truly catholic character," and the freedom of its publications "from denominational peculiarities." *

9. The republicanism of these works, if this is what is meant by the expression, "all breathing the spirit of civil and religious liberty." †

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* That is, within the limits to which the somewhat arbitrary and varying term "*evangelical*" has been applied. The most recent determination of these limits which has issued from the Tract House is, so far as I am aware, the following: — "There is a happy agreement among all evangelical Christians regarding the fundamental truths of the Bible. However they may differ as to philosophy and religious order and ordinances, the doctrines of 'Man's native sinfulness; the purity and obligation of the law of God; the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; the necessity and reality of his atonement and sacrifice; the efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the work of renovation; the free and full offers of the Gospel, and the duty of man to accept it; the necessity of personal holiness; and an everlasting state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave,' and related truths, are loved alike by the great family of the redeemed, of every name and nation." — I confess that, in making this extract from the recent volume on "Home Evangelization," "by one of the Secretaries of the American Tract Society," I have been obliged to use self-denial (in adherence to my rule), not to italicize the word "loved," when the doctrine mentioned in most immediate connection with it is that of "an everlasting state of punishments beyond the grave."

† Their merits in this respect, though I know nothing which directly militates against the claim, are certainly not as obvious as in some

10. Their "*very high character*," being the "result," as they are, "of more than twenty years of careful examination of the practical religious literature of the present and preceding centuries."

11. "The seal of his special approbation,"* which "God has been pleased to place" "upon these works," and "the fact that the Holy Spirit has honored some of them for more than two centuries as a means of salvation to thousands of souls."

That some of these claims have been put forth without all the consideration which so important a matter deserves, is possible; that any of them have been put forth in bad faith, I have no suspicion. But it is obvious what an immense responsibility they impose upon the Society. And if it were *possible* to make the supposition (*Be such a supposition as far from the Society as the east is from the west!*) that these claims partake of the nature of pretension, that they are not upheld by the most watchful care and a sense of the deepest responsibility, that the immense issues of the Society are poured forth without an individual, constant, and scrutinizing supervision by the Committee of distinguished men whose guaranty they bear, — from such a supposition, would

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others. How many of them contain any thing which the Emperor Nicholas or Prince Metternich would object to on political grounds?

* This language is most formidably strong. It would seem to mean, if words are to be taken in their ordinary sense, that one cannot find fault with the publications of the American Tract Society, without an act of direct rebellion against God. Is this, can this be, what the Society means? I cannot believe it; and must rather think that a figurative and hyperbolical expression has been employed so often, that it is now sometimes used as a kind of current coin, without a consciousness of its intense significance.

not the inevitable conclusion be, that you are taking part in a system of gigantic, of stupendous imposture?

II. *Does not the recent vast increase in the scale and extent of the Society's operations also greatly increase its responsibility in respect to the character of its publications?*

This increase will perhaps be shown sufficiently for our present purpose, by a single extract in addition to the preceding.

"The *extent and increasing importance* of this work will be seen in the fact that, from small beginnings in 1825, the Society's operations have gradually increased, till, in the last year, its receipts for books sold and donations, were more than $160,000; more than half a million of books and five millions of Tracts were circulated; and 267 colporteurs, including 44 students for vacations, were in commission, in 27 States, for the whole or part of the year — 37 of them among the German, French, Irish, and Norwegian population — who visited 215,000 families, or a twentieth part of our entire population. Nearly one-sixth of these families were found destitute of every religious book; not more than one-half were habitual attendants on public worship; and more than 30,000 families were Roman Catholics or other errorists. Fifty-seven thousand books and 3,000,000 pages of Tracts were distributed gratuitously to the destitute. The total value of grants of publications, including the amount delivered to Life Members, was $24,000; besides which, more than $40,000 was expended for colportage, and $10,000 for foreign operations. Such has been the scale of operations for a year. The Society now has on its list more than 1,200 different publications, including about 200 volumes in the English and other modern languages, besides which more than 2,000 publications have been approved for circulation in foreign lands, in nearly one hundred different languages and dialects.

"To give more extensive and systematic distribution to these works, at home and abroad, the Society now has the coöperation

of several hundred American missionaries, of different denominations, in the foreign field; a much larger number of domestic missionaries, each entitled to 5,000 pages of Tracts annually for the destitute; and thousands of voluntary colporteurs, or Tract distributors, supplying monthly the families of our large cities and towns with these publications.

"*Foreign Missionaries* regard the Christian press as an indispensable auxiliary to the most successful prosecution of their labors; and not being able to reach hundreds of millions of the benighted heathen, with the living voice, they appeal to American Christians for a large supply of books and Tracts; and it has been the privilege of this Society, for several years past, to appropriate from $10,000 to $20,000 annually, in carrying on this great work in foreign lands, by means of which, tens of thousands of wretched idolaters are now permitted to read in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."— *Circular*, p. 3.

That is, in less than twenty-five years, the Society, from an humble distributer of tracts, has become a gigantic book-publishing establishment; and, in addition to being an efficient coöperator with the foreign and domestic missionary, has recently become in itself, by its system of colportage, a great domestic missionary society.*

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* In respect to the particular merits of the controversy which has recently arisen between some booksellers and the friends of charity publication societies, I am quite ignorant. My general principles would lead me, unless there is some reason for exception in this case of which I am not aware, to allow to these societies the largest liberty of doing good in every lawful way, whether by making or by buying books, by selling them or by giving them away; and at the same time, to allow to every individual just the same liberty of determining, according to his own judgment and conscience, whether he will purchase the publications of these societies, or in any other more direct way contribute to their treasuries. I make a single extract from the Rev. Mr. Hooker's recent "Appeal to the Christian Public, on the Evil and Impolicy of the Church engaging in Merchandise, and setting forth the

A striking view of the influence which the Society is thus exerting is presented in the following extract: —

Wrong done to Booksellers, and the Extravagance, Inutility, and Evil-working of Charity Publication Societies" (I should ask him to shorten the title if I had occasion to refer to it often), simply as an illustration of that *greatness* of the Tract Society which has excited the jealousy (if this is the right word) of individual booksellers. My own questions with the Society are not at all of an industrial, but wholly of a religious, moral, and intellectual character.

"AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

"This institution is called a Tract Society, and, as such societies are apt to do, has been tempted in its strength to depart from its design and become a large book-publishing concern, one of the largest in our country. It professes to furnish religions books at cost, and perhaps when the expenses of its 400 colporteurs and the large salaries of its many agents and clerks are reckoned into the account, this may be found true. Its publications are certainly sold so near their cost that all private enterprise and capital must fail in any attempt to publish at similar rates. Here, then, is a society with its many hundreds of agents and servants, with mouth so large that nothing can fill it, and with tongues so various and many-toned, that you can hear nothing else, crying to be supported on the charity of Christian people, and yet doing nothing to support itself. Its hired emissaries, its devouring presses, are fed at the hand of charity — a weak, ill-judging, yet generous charity. Well, what is the result? It has paralysed the enterprise of individnals lawfully engaged in publishing religious and useful books. It has, to an extent many times exceeding the means and influence of the society, driven the capital of publishers into new channels, and caused, directly and indirectly, the circulation in cheap forms of more useless and injurious books than the society, with her thousand hands and tongues and charity boxes, can ever counteract. This is no idle and unmeaning view of the case. Every bookseller knows the danger and impolicy of pnblishing, or keeping on his shelves, religious books. The entire book business has undergone a change Wholesale dealers, who supplied conntry booksellers, seldom got an order, five years ago, which did not include many religious books. Now, it is a rare thing that a single book of a religious kind is called for by houses that formerly sold thousands.

"The distribution of these works over our country *exerts a permanent influence.* Every well-bound volume of standard character, and of acknowledged worth, may be considered as a kind of circulating and neighbourhood preacher, visiting from house to house, often from one town to another; and not unfrequently will such preachers live to preach the Gospel with power and success for generations to come. Two such venerable preachers, who had evidently seen extensive and hard service, both in the old world and the new, were recently found in the great valley of the West, who had been inducted into the ministry by Luther himself; had filled their high vocations for 300 years; and had preached to the men of nine generations. What Christian would not exult in the honor and privilege of planting such a preacher on the walls of Zion?" — *Circular*, p. 8.

If, then, the Society, in the publication of Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, has introduced into the field 250,000 preachers of the same identical type of ministerial character, is it not of vast consequence that this type should be the very best possible?

The two questions already proposed have been designed to introduce a third, which may be regarded as the main question in this Appeal, and as including, in general, all which will follow, although, for the sake of convenience, they will be separately numbered.

III. *Do not the publications of the Society, notwithstanding all the pains already bestowed upon them, require a new and more thorough revision?*

They say they cannot sell them, that the demand has ceased. This is known to be true through the whole country, as a change in the times. They can now only sell school books, novels, picture books, and standard books, and none others pay for publishing. This is the general statement of men engaged in the trade. It is caused by the action of religious societies, and most of all by this book making tract society." — p. 4.

By this question is not meant, "Do they not require revision, in order to conform to the standard set up by the individual who addresses you?" but, "Do they not require revision, in order to conform to the general views and feelings of that great body of pious and intelligent clergymen and laymen who are either officers or members of the Society, — of those 'most intelligent and discriminating communities' their 'wide circulation' in which is regarded as 'an evidence of their inestimable value,' — and to take still bolder ground, even of that 'judicious Committee' by whose guaranty they are commended to universal circulation as 'worthy of all confidence'?" But, to proceed to particulars, if these views and feelings are to be regarded, —

IV. *Do not the publications of the Society abound too much in such expressions as the following?*

A — C. "The abyss," "that abyss of agony," "inconceivable agony," "burnings," "everlasting burnings," "devouring burnings," "that burning of the Almighty's fury," "you must turn or burn,"* "cup of misery."

D, E. "The damned," "damned souls," "the spirits of the damned," "the cry of the damned," "damnation," "the damnation of hell," "hell and damnation," "eternal damnation," "the miseries of damnation," "the terrors of damnation," "damnation with all its horrors," "the insufferable pangs of death and damnation," "the darkness of hell," "the land of darkness," "chains of darkness," "the darkness visible," "the utter darkness which shall never be cheered by one gleam of light," "a horrible night of eternal darkness," "utter darkness and despair," "infinite despair," "the tortures of despair," "horror and de-

* This concise presentation, in Baxter's Call, of the great alternative, besides a laconic power of expression which a Spartan might envy, has a keen play upon words worthy of a jester in Pandemonium.

spair inexpressible and eternal," "the desperation of the damned," "death everlasting," "death eternal," "the awful deep," "the dreadful deep of hell," "the depths of hell," "everlasting destruction," "hell and destruction," "the perfect and eternal destruction of the wicked," "eternal doom," "dreadful doom," "direful doom," "infernal dungeon," "demons," "the devil," "all the devils in hell," "tormenting devils," "the victim of devils," "prey of devils," "the horrible society of the devil," "dreadful eternity."

F, G. "The fire of hell," "hell-fire," "fire and brimstone," "flaming fire," "consuming fire," "devouring fire," "quenchless fire," "fire unquenchable," "everlasting fire," "eternal fire," "billows of fire," "tempests of angry fire," "the horrid glare of hellish fire," "the flames of hell," "infernal flames," "everlasting flame," "undying flames," "the livid flame," "the burning flame," "scorching flames," "the devouring flames of hell," "the everlasting flames of hell," "the furnace of hell," "the furnace of fire," "the furnace of eternal vengeance," "great furnace," "furnace of the most fierce and raging heat," "the gates of the infernal furnace," "fiends of hell," "ever-tormenting fiends," "infernal foe," "the gulf of sorrow," "gulf of perdition."

H—M. "Hell," "the door of hell," "the mouth of hell," "the lowest hell," "the deepest and most wretched hell," "the horrors of hell," "the horrors of an eternity in hell," "scat of horrors," "inconceivable horrors," "the punishments of hell," "the eternal misery of hell," "the terrors of sinners in hell," "the heirs of hell," "the members of the corporation of hell" (!!!), "the burning lake," "that lake of fire," "weltering in the lake of fire," "the myriads of the lost," "the miseries of the lost," "the sufferings of the lost," "the millions of the lost wailing in utter despair," "gloomy mansions," "the misery of the damned," "the sinner's misery," "place of misery," "eternal misery," "everlasting remediless misery," "endless misery in fire," "the misery that shall never know one moment's ease."

N — R. "Eternal night," "endless pain," "the pains of hell," "the plagues of hell," "the sorrows of perdition," "endless perdition," "perdition and damnation," "dread waves of perdi-

tion," "the pit," "the bottomless pit," "the pit of perdition," "that pit of despair," "the pit of fire and darkness," "the prison of the lost," "dismal prison," "this flaming prison," "the horrors of the hellish prison," "the prisoner of hell," "endless punishment," "future ruin," "horrid ruin."

S, T. "Spirit in hell," "infernal spirits," "the infernal spirits that toss and howl in agony," "the pile of Tophet," "the deep and devouring gulf of Tophet," "torment," "place of torment," "state of torment," "the tormented captives," "tormented with devils for ever," "tormented with the devils in eternal fire," "the dreadful forms of hellish tormentors," "eternal torment," "full and everlasting torment," "endless torments," "the damned's torment," "everlasting torments of the damned," "bed of torments," "torments in hell," "hell-torments," "fruitless cries in torment and desperation," "burning torments of hell for ages and ages."

But, methinks, I hear you cry "Hold! enough!" although several letters of the alphabet still remain, and the quotations upon the previous letters might be greatly multiplied. Enough, however, has been quoted, I think, to show you how rich the literature which you publish is in a particular class of expressions. It is true that the elements of these expressions are found in the Scriptures; although, why they are found there, and what they mean there, it would be out of place here to discuss. But I think that you cannot yourselves but be struck with the patience, firmness of nerve, and ingenuity, with which, in some of your books, these elements have been multiplied and combined, as it were in an *infernal Kaleidoscope*, so as to present images of variegated, picturesque, and transcendent horror. Some of these combinations are quite master-pieces in their way.

To obtain a just impression of the *frequency* with

which some of these expressions are repeated in works which you publish, you must read for yourselves; unless, perchance, as some have counted how often the words "and" and "the" occur in the Bible, so others would count how often less harmless words occur in your publications. But even then, the impression from the mere numbers would be faint in comparison with that which you would gain from actual perusal.*

V. *Are not gross material representations of future punishment more prominent in the publications of the Society, than they are in your own minds?*

I here appeal with perfect confidence to educated men, and especially to educated clergymen. The establishment of theological seminaries, the more thorough study of the Scriptures, sounder views of biblical inter-

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* To pass by such old writers as Alleine and Baxter, who lived in ruder times, and such a writer of the present age as Pike, who appears to be *Baxter-mad* and intent upon even *out-Baxtering* Baxter, and to take the just issued and beautifully illustrated "Scripture Facts in Simple Language, by the Author of the Peep of Day," even in these the word "devil" occurs, if I have counted right, no fewer than *sixty-seven* times, and the word "hell" *sixty-eight!* And the whole for *twenty-five cents!* Surely, even in these days of cheapening, no one could ask that the domains of the prince of darkness should be made *cheaper* than this. And yet this series of "Scripture Facts" was written by a *lady;* and has received the following commendation, which I find in the last number of your wide-spread Messenger, from another lady: — "A very intelligent lady writes, 'Those beautiful Fifty-two Scripture Facts! I never saw any thing which so delighted me; they fascinate me, the style is so exquisitely simple and clear; each one is so perfect and so complete, and the pictures and paper are so in keeping with the matter. Who is the author? I feel that I love her.'" — Was the eye of this "very intelligent lady" so occupied by the beautiful "pictures" and fine "paper," that her ear failed to catch the *low, terrible key-note* of the series, or must we suppose that she is delighted by such music?

pretation, Sabbath school instruction, and the wider circulation of commentaries upon the Bible, have wrought a wonderful change within the last half century. And, with the rapid diffusion of intelligence, this change is still rapidly extending. Even your own wide-spread operations, by awakening the minds of men to religious consideration, are contributing greatly to promote this work. It is now seen, that many expressions in the Scriptures *must* be interpreted figuratively and spiritually, which once were commonly understood literally.* The first

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* It surely cannot be necessary, in addressing *you*, to adduce any testimony upon this point. Still the following extract, taken from a *species of apology* for the doctrine of endless punishment, has so much to recommend it besides the distinguished reputation of its author, that I have believed you would excuse its insertion.

"One of the most impressive of all the objections felt and made against endless misery, is, that, as many seem to hold and teach the doctrine, *it represents all future punishment as undistinguishing and of equal severity.*

"I readily acknowledge that the subject may be so treated as to make such an impression. If, for example, only one expression, or one image employed by the sacred writers, be set before the minds of those who are uninstructed, and this without any explanation, such an impression may easily be made. I will suppose a preacher to speak habitually of hell merely as a lake of fire, and to convey the idea that this expression is to be *literally* understood, and give no explanations; then will it not be almost a matter of course, that many of his hearers will suppose he means to teach a kind of *equality* of punishment in a future world, and an equality which involves the idea of the most aggravated torture appointed for the least as well as the greatest of sinners? All, as the matter is represented, are cast into the same lake without distinction. How then can the punishment of one differ from the punishment of another?

"Such a question a teacher of this class ought naturally to expect. But another teacher, who has effectually learned, that all language borrowed from the *material* world and appropriated to the description of a world which is *immaterial* and *spiritual*, must of necessity be taken

year in a theological seminary has a wonderful efficacy in dispelling from the minds of the students certain bugbears which they have often brought there, and which, in their subsequent preaching, if they do not directly endeavour to remove from the minds of their hearers, yet they are usually quite cautious about summoning up. There is a *sense*, doubtless, in which it may be said that, at the present time, the educated clergy are, as a body, less orthodox than their people. And on this account, some worthy men have taken alarm in respect to the influence of theological seminaries.

But to return to the publications of your Society, let me appeal to those of you who are clergymen, if your preaching to your people — to those who are Sabbath school teachers, if your instructions to your pupils — and to those who are parents, if your lessons to your children — compare at all with the following extracts? And if they do not, let me ask if you are willing to do upon a great scale, in your corporate capacity, that which you would shrink from doing upon a small scale as individuals? I trust that the familiar proverb, "Corporations have no souls," does not apply to the American Tract Society.

"Consider also that their torment will be *universal*. As all parts have joined in sin, so must they all partake in the torment. The soul, as it was the chief in sinning, shall be the chief in suf-

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in a modified or tropical sense; who, at the same time, takes pains to inculcate on the minds of his hearers the *scriptural* idea, that every one will be rewarded according to his works, and that punishment will never exceed the measure of crime, and always will keep pace with it — such a teacher may avoid any grounds of just objection in respect to the matter before us." — *Professor Stuart, Biblical Repository, July*, 1840.

fering; and as it is of a more excellent nature than the body, so will its torments far exceed bodily torments; and as its joys far surpass all sensual pleasures, so the pains of the soul exceed corporeal pains. It is not only a soul, but a sinful soul that must suffer. Fire will not burn, except the fuel be combustible; but if the wood be dry, how fiercely will it burn! The guilt of their sins will be to damned souls like tinder to gunpowder, to make the flames of hell take hold upon them with fury. The body must also bear its part. That body which was so carefully looked to, so tenderly cherished, so curiously dressed, what must it now endure! How are its haughty looks now brought down! How little will those flames regard its comeliness and beauty! Those eyes, which were wont to be delighted with curious sights, must then see nothing but what shall terrify them! an angry God above them, with those saints whom they scorned, enjoying the glory which they have lost; and about them will be only devils and damned souls. . . . . Is it an intolerable thing to burn part of thy body by holding it in the fire? What, then, will it be to suffer ten thousand times more for ever in hell!" — *Baxter's "Saints' Rest,"* pp. 142, 147.

"Consider *painful sensations*. To these belong all those expressions of Scripture — 'darkness, blackness of darkness, thirst, fire, lake burning with fire and brimstone' — and all these to such a degree that the damned would esteem as an invaluable benefit one drop of water *to cool their tongues*. Luke, 16: 24. We dare not pretend to determine that hell consists of material fire. But if you recollect the power of God to excite in our souls such sensations as he pleases, if to this reflection you add the thought — that Scripture almost always employs the idea of fire to express the pains of hell, you will be inclined to believe that most of these unhappy sufferers literally endure torments like those which men burning in flames feel, whether God act immediately on their souls, or unite them to particles of material fire. The very name given in Scripture to the fire of hell hath something very significant in it: it is called *the fire of Gehenna*. Matt. 5: 22. This word is compounded of words which signify *the valley of Hinnom*: this valley was rendered famous by the abominable sacrifices which the idolatrous Jews offered to Moloch. They set up a hollow brazen figure, in-

closed their children in it, kindled fires underneath, and in this horrible manner consumed the miserable infant victims of their cruel superstition. This is an image of hell, — terrible image! We have no need of abstract and metaphysical ideas. Who among us could patiently bear his hand one hour in fire? who would not tremble to be condemned to pass one day in this monstrous machine? and who — who could bear to be eternally confined in it — 'and yet forbid to die?' When we see a criminal in chains, given up to an executioner of human justice, and just going to be burnt to death, nature shudders at the sight — the flesh of spectators shiver — and the cries of the sufferer rend their heart, and excite, in painful compassion, all the emotions of the soul! What then must it be to be delivered up to an executioner of *Divine justice!* What, to be cast into the fire of hell! Delicate flesh! feeble organs of the human body! what will you do when you are cast into the quick and devouring flames of hell?" — *Saurin on "The Eternal Misery of Hell,"* p. 2.

"To all that misery is added that of the fire that never shall be quenched. And Oh, who can dwell with devouring fire? who can endure everlasting burnings? All the torments which martyrs have suffered would be easy, compared with the torments of damnation. Many of those faithful servants of God have yielded up their lives in the midst of dreadful burnings; but these were not an everlasting fire. An old writer says, 'I have read of the horrid execution of a traitor: being naked, he was chained fast to a chair of brass or some other metal, that would burn most furiously, being filled with fiery heat; about which was made a mighty fire, that by little and little caused the chair to be red and raging hot, so that the miserable man roared hideously many hours for extremest anguish, and so expired. But what an horrible thing had it been to have lain in that dreadful torment eternally.' If merely a finger be burnt, or one limb be scorched, how tormenting is the pain! yet what is this compared with sinking in the flaming waves of hell, tormented in every part, and nothing to give a momentary relief! yet such must be the careless sinner's dreadful portion. The Son of God himself has declared the awful truth; and it is hideous cruelty to an immortal soul to reject it, through a delusive hope that God's threatenings will not be fulfilled. Can you then, O

young sinner! *dwell with everlasting burnings?* you must, if you do not repent. Were your hand thrust into a flaming furnace, the torment would be great, but more supportable if you were assured that in a minute it should be taken out again: but if your hand were capable of lasting so long, and you were assured that it should continue burning for life, how intolerable would your misery seem? how would you wish for death to end it, yet it would be as nothing, compared with what the spirits of the lost must feel in hell. There *all* the soul, and, after the resurrection, *all* the immortal body, must endure indescribable misery, and no easy part within or without. How dreadful is the state of those who, dying in their sins, are dragged down by devils to infinite despair! Oh what a change, when they are snatched away from the world they loved, to that where there is nothing but malignant spirits to torment them! no sound of a Saviour's love; but horrid lamentations and despair. What fearful horrors stare them in the face on every side! How would they shrink back from the mouth of the infernal dungeon, but Oh! they cannot, for the wrath of an incensed God drives them in. And when once they have entered it, it is for eternity. Alas! how infernal the society, how doleful the abode! Oh the dreadful torments of eternal fire! Oh the horrid company of hellish fiends! Where can they turn their affrighted eyes? Alas! it is everywhere the same sad spectacle, blackness, and darkness, and devils, and flame. . . . . .

"How dreadful a change is this for the careless sinner. . . . . Here by night an easy bed refreshes his weary limbs, and in calm sleep even his sorrows are forgotten; but there he will sleep no more to forget his misery, but writhe and toss his wretched form for ever on the lake of fire." — *Pike's "Persuasives* to Early Piety,"* pp. 361–364.

"He that is now thy tempter, will one day be thy tormentor. O that I could but give thee to see how bad a master thou servest, how merciless a tyrant thou gratifiest; all whose pleasure is to set thee on to make thy perdition and damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter in which thou must burn for millions and millions of ages! . . . . .

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* What a strange misnomer!

"Would it not pierce thy heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling to carry together fagots and fuel for their own burning? This is the employment of sin's drudges. Even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they sing in pleasure, they are but treasuring up vengeance for their eternal burning; they are but adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the fiercer. . . . . .

"*The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated ready for thee.* Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee; they gape for thee; they groan for thee, Isa. 5 : 14; waiting as it were with a greedy eye, as thou standest on the brink. If the wrath of men be 'as the roaring of a lion,' 'more heavy than the sand,' what is the wrath of the infinite God? If the burning furnace heated in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery rage, when he commanded it to be made yet seven times hotter, was so fierce as to burn up even those that drew near to throw the three children in, how hot is that burning of the Almighty's fury! Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What thinkest thou, O man, of being a fagot in hell * to all eternity? 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee? saith the Lord of hosts.' Canst thou abide the everlasting burnings? Canst thou dwell with consuming fire; when thou shalt be as glowing iron in hell, and thy whole body and soul shall be as perfectly possessed by God's burning vengeance as the sparkling iron with fire, when heated in the fiercest furnace? Some of the choicest servants of God, when under the hidings of his face, and dreading the effects of his displeasure, have bewailed their condition with bitter lamentations. How then wilt thou endure when God shall pour out all his vials, and set himself against thee, to torment thee; when he shall make thy conscience the tunnel * by which he will be pouring his burning

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* What an imagination that must have been, which conceived such intensely horrid, and yet ludicrous images as these, and some others which occur in this "Alarm"! If the Society should proceed to the illustration of its series of bound volumes in order to make them more attractive, what a book this of Alleine's would be for the pencil of an ingenious designer! But, pray, is it because nothing better can be found to print, that the Society has taken this old book, written for a ruder age,

wrath into thy soul for ever, and when he shall fill all thy pores as full of torment as they are now full of sin; when immortality shall be thy misery, and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed in the gulf of annihilation, shall be such a felicity as the whole eternity of wishes and an ocean of tears shall never purchase?

"Now thou canst put off the evil day, and laugh and be merry, and forget 'the terror of the Lord.' But how wilt thou hold out, or hold up, when God will cast thee into a 'bed of torments,' and make thee to 'lie down in sorrow'; when roarings and blasphemies shall be thy only music, and the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, shall be thy only drink; and when thou shalt draw in flames for thy breath: in a word, when the smoke of thy torment shall ascend for ever and ever, and thou shalt have no rest day nor night, no rest in thy conscience, no ease in thy bones; but thou shalt be an execration and astonishment, and a curse and a reproach, for evermore? Jer. 42: 18.

"O sinner, stop here, and consider. If thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider. Bethink thyself where thou standest — upon the very brink of destruction. As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step betwcen thee and this. Thou knowest not, when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in hell before morning: thou knowest not, when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before night." — *Alleine's "Alarm to Unconverted Sinners,"* pp. 114 – 119.

"The redeemed church shall all ascend with him [with Christ after the general judgment] in a most joyful and triumphant manner: and all their enemies and persecutors, who shall be left behind to be consumed, shall see the sight and hear their songs. And thus Christ's church shall for ever leave this accursed world, to go into the highest heavens, the paradise of God, the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

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brushed it up by 'altering numerous obsolete or defective words or phrases' and 'omitting some passages,' and multiplied it to the extraordinary number of 128,000, (selling even 75,000 copies in three years,) to be an educator of the sensibilities and taste of the rising generation in every part of our land? What henceforth will be incredible?

"When they are gone, *this world shall be set on fire*, and turned into a great furnace, wherein all the enemies of Christ and his church shall be tormented for ever and ever. 2 Pet. 3 : 7. 'But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' How will it strike the wicked with horror, when the fire begins to lay hold upon them, and they find no way to escape from it! What shrieking and crying will there be among those many millions when they begin to enter into this great furnace, when the whole world shall be a furnace of the fiercest and most raging heat! insomuch that the apostle Peter says, 2 Pet. 3 : 10, 12, 'that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.' And so fierce shall be its heat, that it shall burn the earth into its very centre: * which seems to be what is meant, Deut. 32 : 22. 'For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.'

"And here shall all the persecutors of the church of God burn in everlasting fire, who had before burnt the saints at the stake; and shall suffer torments far beyond all that their utmost wit and malice could inflict on the saints. And here the bodies of all the wicked shall burn, and be tormented to all eternity, and never be consumed; and the wrath of God shall be poured out upon their souls. Though the souls of the wicked in hell do now suffer dreadful punishment, yet their punishment will be so increased at the day of judgment that what they suffered before is, in comparison of it, as an imprisonment to the execution which follows." — *Edwards's "History of Redemption,"* p. 420.†

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* This consummation of a *central fire* would seem, according to the deductions of modern science, to have been for some reason anticipated thousands of years.

† This work is stated by the Society to be published "with the omission of a few lines alluding to points on which evangelical christians differ." Are we to infer from this statement, and from the gen-

It is with pain that, among these extracts, I must acknowledge one to be of New England origin, and from the pen of the distinguished President Edwards. It cannot be enough regretted, that this remarkable man, fettered by the theology of his age and sect, and by wrong or imperfect views of Biblical interpretation, employed so intensely his keen logic and vivid imagination to gain for himself the unenviable distinction of standing at the very head of those to whom Mr. Foster applies the borrowed term "damnation writers." That he was an intellectual Samson, no one can deny; but, alas! he was Samson *blind*, and *bound*, and *grinding in a prison-house*.

VI. *Is it not better to omit all such representations of God, and of saints in heaven, as the following?*

Even if you regard them as *in some sense* true, yet

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eral guaranty which the Society gives in respect to its publications, that the doctrine contained in this extract, that *this world is to become the hell of the wicked*, is put forth by the Society as one on which evangelical Christians do *not* differ, and which the Society is ready to warrant to the young and the ignorant who may read its publications, as "worthy of all confidence"? Do so many intelligent men need to be informed, that, among those who believe that this material world will outlast the day of final judgment, the belief that it will become *the heaven of the righteous* is far the more prevalent? Indeed, they ought not to have forgotten, that, in that new revelation of the past and future which they have published to supply the deficiencies and correct the errors of the old, under the title of "The Peep of Day" (see pp. 106-116), the question is thus authoritatively decided against Edwards: — "The world will not burn forever; it will be burnt up at last, and God will make another much better that this." — p. 197. If my room would allow, the whole of the two last lessons of this strange book would be well worth extracting, for the very definite and minute information which the authoress there gives respecting the final judgment and the condition of the righteous and the wicked.

can you conceive it possible, that they should throw their gloomy shade into the youthful or the ignorant mind, without destroying or obscuring there the bright images of those higher truths which beam upon us from the Scriptures in words like these? — "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

"1. The *principal Author* of hell-torments is God himself. As it was no less than God whom the sinners had offended, so it is no less than God who will punish them for their offences. He hath prepared those torments for his enemies. His continued anger will still be devouring them. His breath of indignation will kindle the flames. His wrath will be an intolerable burden to their souls. . . . .

"2. The *place or state of torment* is purposely ordained to glorify the justice of God. . . . As God will then glorify his mercy in a way that is now beyond the comprehension of the saints that must enjoy it; so also will he manifest his justice to be indeed the justice of God. The everlasting flames of hell will not be thought too hot for the rebellious; and, when they have there burned through millions of ages, he will not repent him of the evil which has befallen them. Wo to the soul that is thus set up as a butt for the wrath of the Almighty to shoot at! and as a bush that must burn in the flames of his jealousy and never be consumed!

"3. The torments of the damned must be extreme, because they are the *effect of divine vengeance.* Wrath is terrible, but revenge is implacable. When the great God shall say, 'My rebellious creatures shall now pay for all the abuse of my patience; remember how I waited your leisure in vain, how I stooped to persuade and entreat you; did you think I would always be so slighted?' then will he be revenged for every abused mercy, and for all their neglects of Christ and grace. O that men would foresee this, and please God better in preventing their wo!

"4. Consider also, that, though God had rather men would

accept of Christ and mercy, yet, when they persist in rebellion, *he will take pleasure in their execution*. He tells us, 'Fury is not in me'; yet he adds, 'Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle; I would go through them, I would burn them together.' Wretched creatures! when 'he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favor. As the Lord rejoiced over them to do them good; so the Lord will rejoice over them to destroy them, and bring them to nought.' Wo to the souls whom God rejoiceth to punish! 'He will laugh at their calamity, he will mock when their fear cometh; when their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon them.' Terrible thing, when none in heaven or earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice in their calamity! Though Scripture speaks of God's laughing and mocking, not literally, but after the manner of men; yet it is such an act of God in tormenting the sinner, as cannot otherwise be more fitly expressed." — *Baxter's* "*Saints' Rest*," pp. 138 – 141.*

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* An apology for the Society may perhaps occur to some charitable minds, that, in reprinting a work of great general excellence, it is better to tolerate some even serious blemishes than to mutilate the work. Most publishers act upon this principle, and are therefore entitled to the benefit of this apology. The Tract Society, however, both professes and acts upon an opposite principle, striking out whatever it regards as offensive to any one of the denominations upon which it relies for support. Besides, in the "Saints' Rest" which the Society publishes, we have not properly Baxter himself, but Baxter greatly abridged and mutilated, much softened, somewhat refashioned, and, I must confess, very greatly improved. Alas that the improvement had not been carried farther! Compare, for example, the two last paragraphs, as given above, with the strong, but almost ferocious, and sometimes ludicrously coarse, original, as left by Baxter: —

"3. The torments of the damned must needs be extreme, because they are the effect of Divine revenge. Wrath is terrible, but revenge is implacable. When the great God shall say, I will now be righted for all the wrongs that I have borne from rebellious creatures; I will let out my wrath, and it shall be stayed no more, you shall now pay

"This rest is *peculiar to saints*, belongs to no other of all the sons of men. . . . . That will surely be a day of passionate sense on both sides, when there shall be two in one bed, and

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for all the abuse of my patience! Remember, now, how I waited your leisure in vain, how I stooped to persuade you; how I, as it were, kneeled to entreat you. Did you think I would always be slighted by such miscreants as you? Oh, who can look up when God shall thus plead with them in the heat of his revenge? Then will he be revenged for every mercy abused, for his creatures consumed in luxury and excess, for every hour's time misspent, for the neglect of his word, for the vilifying of his messengers, for the hating of his people, for the profanation of his ordinances and neglect of his worship, for the breaking of his sabbaths and the grieving of his Spirit, for the taking of his name in vain, for unmerciful neglect of his servants in distress. Oh! the numberless bill that will be brought in! and the charge that will overcharge the soul of the sinner! And how hotly revenge will pursue them all to the highest! How God will stand over them with the rod in his hand, (not the rod of fatherly chastisement, but that iron rod wherewith he bruiseth the rebellious,) and lay it on for all their neglects of Christ and grace! Oh that men would foresee this, and not put themselves under the hammer of revenging fury, when they may have the treasure of happiness at so easy rates, and please God better in preventing their woe!

"4. Consider, also, how this justice and revenge will be the delight of the Almighty. Though he had rather men would stoop to Christ, and accept of his mercy, yet when they persist in rebellion, he will take pleasure in their execution. Though he desire not the death of him that dieth, but rather that he repent and live; yet, when he will not repent and live, God doth desire and delight in the execution of justice conditionally. So that men will repent, he desires not their death, but their life, Ezek. xxxiii. 11; yet, if they repent not, in the same place he uttereth his resolution for their death, ver. 8, 13. . . . . [The part here omitted consists chiefly of quotations from the Scriptures, closing with Prov. i. 22–29.] I could entreat thee, who readest them, if thou be one of that sort of men, that thou wilt but view over seriously that part of the chapter (Prov. i.) from the 20th verse to the end, and believe them to be the true words of Christ by his Spirit in Solomon. Is it not a terrible thing to a wretched soul, when it shall lie roaring perpetually in the flames of hell, and the God of mercy himself shall laugh at them; when they

two in the field, the one taken and the other left. The saints shall look down upon the burning lake, and in the sense of their own happiness, and in the approbation of God's just proceedings, they shall rejoice and sing, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord! who wast, art, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' " — *Baxter's "Saints' Rest,"* pp. 62. 63.*

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shall cry ont for mercy, yea, for one drop of water, and God shall mock them instead of relieving them; when none in heaven or earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice over them in their calamity? Why, yon see these are the very words of God himself in Scripture. And most just is it, that they who laughed at the sermon, and mocked at the preacher, and derided the people that obeyed the gospel, should be laughed at and derided by God. Ah! poor ignorant fools, (for so this text calls them,) they will then have mocking enough, till their hearts ache with it. I dare warrant them for ever making a jest at godliness more, or making themselves merry with their own slanderous reports. It is themselves, then, that must be the woeful objects of derision, and that of God himself, who wonld have crowned them with glory. I know when the Scripture speaks of God's laughing and mocking, it is not to be understood literally, but after the manner of men: but this may suffice us, that it will be such an act of God to the tormenting of the sinner, which he cannot more fitly conceive or express nnder any other notion or name, than these."

* The original reads thus: —

"The third comfortable attribute of this rest is, that it is the saints' proper and peculiar possession. . . . . Oh! that will surely be a day of passionate sense on both sides, when two shall be in a bed, and two in the field, the one taken, and the other forsaken. For a Christian, who is conscious of his own undeserving and ill-deserving, to see his companion in sin perish, his neighbour, kinsman, father, mother, wife, child, for ever in hell, while he is preferred among the blessed; to see other men's sins eternally plagued, while his are all pardoned; to see those that were wont to sit with us in the same seat, and eat with us at the table, and join with ns in the same duties, now to lie tormented in those flames, while we are triumphing in divine praises; that Lot must leave his sons-in-law in the flames of Sodom, and the wife of his bosom as a monument of Divine vengeance, and escape with his two daughters alone; here is choosing, distinguishing mercy! Therefore, the Scripture seems to affirm, that as

Extracts like these certainly require no remark.*

VII. *Should not statements in respect to persons be made with great care, especially when those persons, or their friends or acquaintances, are still living?*

No one at all acquainted with the world is ignorant

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the damned souls shall, from hell, see the saints' happiness, to increase their own torments, so shall the blessed, from heaven, behold the wicked's misery to the increase of their own joy: and as they looked on the dead bodies of Christ's two witnesses, slain in their streets, and they that dwelt on the earth rejoiced over them and made merry, Rev. xi. 10, and as the wicked here behold the calamities of God's people with gladness; so shall the saints look down upon them in the burning lake, and in the sense of their own happiness, and in the approbation of God's just proceedings, they shall rejoice and sing, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast thus judged; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy. Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power to our God; for true and righteous are his judgments,' Rev. xvi. 5, 6. And as the command is over Babylon, so will it be over all the condemned souls, 'Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her,' Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 7, 8."

* One of the more recent publications of the Society, "Universalism not of God," by the Rev. M. H. Smith, contains a statement so extraordinary, that I have looked at it several times, first to be sure that my eyes did not deceive me, and then to see if the connection would not suggest some correction. Instead of suggesting a correction, it hardly appears to admit of any without involving new difficulties; and yet, after all, it seems to me that there *must be* some mistake; for, whatever our fathers may have written, I cannot believe it possible that, in a *recent work*, a sensible man would purposely make such a statement, or a sensible society publish it. Chapter VIII. of this work bears the title, "UNIVERSALISM DISPROVED BY FUTURE AND ENDLESS PUNISHMENT," (looking a little too much, the logician would say, like a *petitio principii*, a *begging of the question*; but let this pass,) and contains the following heads: "There must be a Future State of Rewards and Punishments"; "There will be a Future Retribution" (of course, if there *must* be); "The Truth of Future Pun-

how liable such statements are to error, how often they give rise to controversy and conflicting testimony, and

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ishment" (of course); "The Purposes of Future Punishment" (we have here a new head); "Its Results." The last head but one, "THE PURPOSES OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT," contains the following subdivisions:—"1. *It will vindicate the character and the government of God.*" "2. *It will purify the church.*" (Do Mr. S. and the Tract Society hold the doctrine of *purgatory?*) "3. *It will reward the good*" (!!!). "4. *It will punish the wicked*" (that is to say, the *act itself* is *one of the purposes* of the act, having a fourth part of the influence in its own creation,—a mode of reasoning, certainly, which would make sad havoc with our common notions of causation).

To pass by all the logic, which is a matter of comparatively slight consequence, will Mr. S., or the Committee who have revised the work, have the kindness to look at the 240th page, and inform us explicitly what they really mean by putting forth upon that page the statements, not in ordinary type, but glaring upon our astonished eyes in capitals and italics, that among "THE PURPOSES OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT" are, "2. *It will purify the church,*" and (still more incredible!) "3. *It will reward the good*"? That the *purification* contemplated will be thorough beyond the conceptions of the most devout Catholic, would seem to be taught by the fact, that *all* which is appended to statement No. 2, by way of explanation, is the following: "Judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter iv. 17, 18"; and that, on the very next page, striking the eye at the same opening, under the head "ITS RESULTS," we find "3. *The punishment will be endless.*" Are we to understand, as would seem necessary from the two statements with the explanation accompanying the former, that some of "the righteous" are to be *purified* by *endless punishment*? An incomprehensible mode, to say the least, of *rewarding the good!* But what does, *what can* all this mean?

I have written the above, with the feeling that those who have not seen the book must think it impossible that I am not in some way quibbling or exaggerating; and to show them that I am doing neither, I should be glad, if it were worth the while, to give upon two of my pages a *facsimile* of pages 240 and 241 of the book. But with the Society's system of operations, is there any part of the country where there can be any difficulty in procuring the original?

how many feelings unfriendly to piety they are apt to excite. The liability to error and dispute is vastly increased when such statements relate to *conversations*. The tongue does not always pronounce the words that are meant ; the ear does not always catch those that are pronounced. Even if they are heard aright, the hearer does not always attach the same sense to them as the speaker. What is spoken in earnest is sometimes understood as a jest ; and still oftener, what is uttered in jest is understood, or afterwards repeated, as spoken in earnest. The memory, too, is peculiarly treacherous in respect to words. After the lapse of a few years, we are in danger of denying what we have ourselves said, and of ascribing to others what they never thought of uttering. There is still another ground for caution. We say many things of ourselves which we are not willing others should say of us ; and how much is uttered in the unbosoming of familiar conversation which, though not spoken under a seal of secrecy, we should still regard it a breach of confidence to repeat, and which would give us great pain if it should come back to us, perhaps greatly distorted, after having run the gauntlet of men's and women's tongues ! There are many persons, too, who do not regard *words* as *things ;* and will falsify in respect to them, with a recklessness which they would shudder at in regard to anything that should be tangible. Even when no misrepresentation is intended, there is a strong temptation not to let the *dramatic interest* of a story be spoiled, because the precise words uttered by the characters were never ascertained, or have been forgotten ; but to apply to the Imagination to furnish by her creative power what we cannot find in any of the cells

of memory. You cannot have failed to remark, how large a place conversations hold in popular religious narratives ; and will not of course suppose that any miraculous interposition is employed to guard this *particular class* of conversations from the *general* liabilities to error and misuse.

If these general remarks have force, the application to be made of them to popular religious publications is quite obvious. Narratives of extraordinary piety, both in mature and still more in early life, and of death-bed triumphs, should be published with great caution in respect to their accuracy, lest those well acquainted with their subjects should be amazed to find, that persons have been canonized whom they had never suspected of being any better than their neighbours. Unfavorable statements should be made with even greater care, lest we either do or be suspected of doing some injustice, or, at any rate, call forth bad passions, and thus injure, instead of promoting, the cause we wish to serve. It is not always wise to publish all that is true ; and many things, from St. Paul's time to the present, have been *lawful*, which are not *expedient*.

Would it not, then, be the part of wisdom, as well as of a scrupulous integrity, carefully to revise those of your publications which contain statements in regard to persons, especially where those statements have been denied either in whole or in part ? To select, for example, a single work, is it judicious in the Society to publish *under its guaranty* statements like the following, and to involve its own reputation in the question of their truth and propriety ? My question is not, whether the

statements are true,* nor whether it was right and wise in their author to make them, nor whether it would be proper for an individual bookseller to publish them; but simply whether, considering the relations of the Tract Society to the Church, to our country, and to the world, it is wise in the Society to incorporate these statements in that series of publications which they recommend as "worthy of all confidence."

"My home was not a religious one; the fear of God was not there. In my father's house† there was no family altar; no voice of prayer was there heard, no reading of the Bible as an act of worship. I never enjoyed the benefit of Sabbath school instruction; no friend told me of God; no one instructed me to lisp his name, or fear his law."—"*Universalism not of God*,"‡ *by the Rev. M. H. Smith*, p. 12.

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* Nothing is farther from my design than to impeach the truth of Mr. Smith's statements. It is enough, and more than enough, for my purpose, to know that they have been impeached, and that in the most public way; although, with how much propriety, I am quite ignorant. The question would even appear to be involved in those peculiar difficulties and delicacies which attach to family quarrels; for I find published a part of a letter dated May 20, 1842, in which his own brother, the Rev. D. D. Smith, says, "The descriptions he gives of his early life and conversion are so untrue to nature, that we recognize nothing of resemblance in his biography to the actual history. He has followed a wild imagination, and its fitful wanderings have caused him to do great injustice to those of whom he professes to write..... We know that the most prominent statements in his book are false." Is it judicious in the Society, however entire may be its confidence in Mr. S., to entangle itself in such a question?

† Mr. Smith's father was the extensively known Elder Elias Smith.

‡ Is it well to use the most holy name to point a title? And here I beg the excellent and able Dr. Bushnell to pardon the suggestion, whether, in a second edition, he cannot change the title of his recent work. As it occurred to his own mind, and as it proceeded from his pen, it may have been entirely unobjectionable; but, now that it has

"A young man, destitute of education, tired of some honest calling, may, in three or four weeks, become the Rev. Mr. B——, able to argue all the good people out of their patience, if not out of their faith.

"A preacher left a Christian denomination, and became a Universalist. In the account he gave of the reasons which made him a Universalist, I heard him relate this: Being troubled with his faith, he resolved to visit Andover, and converse with the professors of the theological school. After repeated conversations with Drs. Woods and Stuart, and finding himself, like the woman in the Gospel, 'no better, but rather worse,' he resolved to avail himself of the large library in the seminary; and, by close study and much prayer, remove his doubts, and firmly settle himself on the foundation of truth. But all his labor was in vain. His difficulties increased, and he was obliged to become a Universalist.

"Some young men of the seminary wished to know how profound his investigations had been. They examined the books of the librarian, and found that in the course of three or four weeks he had taken from the library two books: one was Hitchcock on Dyspepsia, the other had something to do with Dietetics."* — *Do.*, p. 79.

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been brought into the marts of trade as the familiar designation of an article of merchandise, it is revolting to think, how it must be bandied about in the exchanges and accounts of booksellers, in auction-sales and advertisements, in the daily dialogues of the bookstore, and in the chit-chat of reading coteries. In order to show the pertinence of my suggestion, I have more than once tried to write down one of those dialogues which are just now, in the sensation which the book is producing, of such constant occurrence. But my pen refuses to do its office. The words "God in Christ" are too solemn to be lightly repeated, even for the sake of illustrating such a repetition. The Jews may have gone to an extreme in their reverence for the name of the Supreme Being, but the opposite extreme is to be avoided with far greater care.

* I would beg leave to prescribe such an extract as this and some which follow, to any who may find themselves disagreeably affected by some of the extracts under former heads. Nothing gives such relief in the theatre, as when broad humor follows intense tragedy. For my-

"A near relation of mine, a Universalist minister, has confessed to me that he preached to get his bread; that his preaching did not reform men, neither did he expect it would; that he was well paid for preaching; that sometimes his hearers were pleased, and sometimes they were offended; but he always got his pay."—*Do.*, p. 86.

"The custom of regular, family prayer, is not to be found in any Universalist preacher's family with which I ever had any acquaintance. I knew one man who asked a blessing at his table; but he did this only when he had company; and was led to the practice by the remark of a friend, who told him he thought it looked strange for a minister to have no blessing craved at his table."—*Do.*, p. 169.

"Some think, as did a Universalist in Salem, who said to me, that 'if he should unite with the church, it would be carrying the joke too far.'"—*Do.*, p. 173.

"A prominent member of a Universalist society was noted for his profanity. One day his minister reproved him for the practice. His reply was this: 'I will tell you what it is; I know I swear a great deal, and in your pulpit you pray a great deal; but we do not either of us mean anything by it.' In a town in Rhode Island the Universalists have communion service once or twice a year. At such times the elements are passed to the whole congregation indiscriminately. Some months since I visited that place. A Sabbath or two before, at their communion, the boys and girls, taking the bread as it was passed to them, converted it into play balls, and passed their time in this manner."—*Do.*, p. 175.

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self, I must acknowledge that the change of *climate*, in passing from the writings of Alleine and Baxter and Pike to those of Mr. Smith, is quite agreeable; and, while I thank him for the relief and entertainment afforded by his racy stories, the question occurs to me, whether such considerations may not have influenced the Publishing Committee of the Tract Society, in adopting his work into their series. May it not be, that they are converts to that *theory of alternate emotions*, which some revival-preachers have practised upon with such wonderful effect, and in which critics have found so ample a justification of the strange contrasts of successive scenes in some of the plays of Shakspeare?

"In another case, a popular Universalist preacher used his influence to persuade some young men to work upon the Sabbath; presenting his character as a preacher, and his example as a man, to break down their scruples." — *Do.*, p. 177.

"I have known a wife and a mother go to a Universalist meeting at first with great reluctance, then feel a strong attachment to the system, and then on her death-bed exclaim, 'For God's sake give me some more rum!'" — *Do.*, p. 183.

"One minister, on the very day of his installation, stated to his society that he had strong doubts about the truth of Universalism, and stronger doubts about the propriety of preaching it, supposing it to be true. He was prevailed upon to wave his doubts, and be installed. He was installed, and preached Universalism to the Society for the space of two years." — *Do.*, p. 200.

"The editor of one of the leading Universalist papers was once asked why he did not elevate the character of his paper. The reply was characteristic: 'Some actors play to the pit; some to the boxes. Those who play to the boxes, get the most honor; those who play to the pit, get the most money.' No man who opens the paper can be at a loss to know to what class its editor plays." — *Do.*, p. 204.

"Beware of Universalist books in disguise. Among the means employed at the present day to spread Universalism, the circulation of books and other publications, with the assurance that they contain nothing that is sectarian, is conspicuous.

"'The Lowell Offering' was projected by a Universalist minister, and conducted by him and his Universalist associates. It has always been under a Universalist influence, and with the exception of not *openly* advocating the doctrine, it is a Universalist periodical. Yet it bears this title: 'Lowell Offering, written by Females actively employed in the Mills. *Every thing of a sectarian character is rigidly excluded.*'" — p. 254.

In regard to the last extract, allow me to ask you if it is *possible* that you can know anything of "The Lowell Offering," and yet set in motion the vast machinery of your Society to raise a hue and cry against it in every

part of the land, — making it, so far as I remember, the only publication singled out in this whole work for condemnation. And what is "The Lowell Offering"? Simply the expression of intelligence and talent and taste in the *Lowell factory-girl*, bravely struggling against the mechanism, noise, and fatigue of the cotton-mill, and the other depressing circumstances by which she is surrounded; — an attempt to make a few flowers bloom — and some of them have been very beautiful — in an ungenial climate; — or, to borrow the expressive image of the Prophet, when rebuking an act of criminal despotism, the poor girl's *one little ewe lamb, which she has bought and nourished up, eating of her own meat, and drinking of her own cup, and lying in her bosom.* And can it be, that a mighty Society should put forth its great resources and vast influence to snatch from the poor girl this *one little ewe lamb* for slaughter? And why? So far as appears from the extract, not because it has advocated Universalism, not because it has violated its pledge to exclude "everything of a sectarian character," not because any charge whatever has been brought against its management; but simply because a Universalist minister had the honor of first suggesting an enterprise which has been so useful and so celebrated, — awakening admiration on both sides of the Atlantic, refuting calumnies, and inspiring new hopes in the lovers of their race, — and because some of its most prominent supporters have entertained similar religious opinions.

Has language provided any appropriate name for a procedure like this? What an extraordinary zeal for the truth that must be, which should constrain a gigantic

Society, in these days in which there is no Inquisition, to *come down from its great work* "of increasing vital piety," for the sake of hunting out the heresy, *not openly expressed*, of a few factory-girls at Lowell, and publishing it through the length and breadth of the land, with the cry "Beware!" Are we to understand, that heresy is of so malignant, so fearfully contagious a nature, that, even without any expression of it, it will be carried, like the plague, in clothes and papers? *

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* Allow me to add an extract from an article upon "The Lowell Offering," in "Lowell as it was, and as it is, by Rev. H. A. Miles," a Unitarian clergyman of the city, published in 1845.

"The variety and merit of articles written by females employed in the mills, and read in an 'Improvement Circle,' formed in the early part of 1840, suggested the publication above named. The first number appeared in October of that year, and succeeding numbers followed at irregular intervals. In April, 1841, a new series was commenced; and, not long after, two female factory operatives became the publishers and editors of the work, which now appeared every month. The Offering was received with much favor, and no little surprise. The leading newspapers and reviews gave it complimentary notices; and many copies of it have been sent to England, where, during the past year, a volume has been published of selections from this periodical, under the significant title of 'Mind among the Spindles.' The extensive reputation which the Offering has gained, has been almost inexplicable to the people of Lowell, who so well know that there *is* mind among the spindles."—p. 202.

With a recent enlargement in the plan of this periodical, there has been also an expansion of its title; so that it now reads "The *New England* Offering; a Magazine of Industry, written by Females who live by their Labor. Harriet Farley, Editor." From having so long heard the name of Miss Farley in connection with the Offering, I suppose her to have been one of the two operatives mentioned by Mr. Miles, and that she has since had the principal conduct of the work. In respect to Miss F.'s religious opinions, I have never heard any thing, and do not even know whether Mr. S.'s remarks are designed to have any application to her.

VIII. *Is it not desirable to avoid all misrepresentation of the Scriptures?*

This misrepresentation may be of three kinds : —

1. *The misrepresentation of the general meaning and spirit of the Scriptures.* It is obvious that any discussion of the question, whether this kind of misrepresentation occurs in your publications, would occupy much space, and perhaps, after all, prove very unsatisfactory. I must therefore content myself, although this is far the most important head of all, with simply commending it to your own examination.

2. *The wrong use of proof-texts.* It is well known to educated clergymen, and to many laymen, that the theological student does not proceed far in his course before he learns that very many of the proof-texts which pass current in popular religious books and addresses are absolutely *counterfeit ;* that some of them have not the slightest reference to the doctrine which they are adduced to prove ; and that others, although they may *illustrate* it, yet, for various reasons, are inadequate to *prove* it. The intelligent reader of the Scriptures is sometimes tempted to smile, when he thinks how much good service some of these texts have done, in awakening the thoughtless, bringing back the wandering, strengthening the weak, and comforting the afflicted. Yet to make use of these when one *knows* them to be counterfeit, is dishonesty of the very worst kind. No clergyman or religious writer can be suspected of it by those whom he addresses, without at once losing his hold upon their confidence and respect. Considering the age of many of the works published by the Society, and how recent, and even yet far from universal, is a

careful discrimination of proof-texts, must there not be reason to fear that your publications may abound in those which are counterfeit, and which both common honesty and sound policy forbid your issuing longer as genuine? I can only suggest the question, for although I have noticed, as I have supposed, many examples, yet it would be too long a work, upon this occasion, to endeavour to show by their connection in the Scriptures their true meaning, and also by their connection in your publications the false sense in which I believe them to be there used.

3. *The perversion of the sacred narrative.* Of this kind of misrepresentation, for which, though less injurious than the other two, it is harder to find an apology, I shall adduce some examples from a famous book written by a lady for the religious instruction of very young children, and entitled "The Peep of Day," of which your edition before me is the fifth American, from the seventh London edition, and which is the first of a series by the same author, thus noticed in your Alphabetical List: —

"PEEP OF DAY — LINE UPON LINE — PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT. These three volumes consist of Bible history, brought down in the most familiar manner to the capacities of *young children*, many of whom have been charmed by the narrative, and through it learned the way of eternal life. 'The Peep of Day' is a minute history of our Lord, from his birth to his ascension. 'Line upon Line' begins with the creation, and proceeds with the Old Testament history to the death of Joshua; and 'Precept upon Precept' takes up the narrative at the birth of Samuel, carrying it to the close of the Old Testament history. These three works perhaps stand at the head of all others in making divine truth clear and attractive to little children. The Biblical Repertory says, 'We have difficulty in

expressing all the admiration and love we feel towards the Peep of Day series. After using them with children, we are prepared to set them above anything of their class we have ever seen.' "— p. 14.

" Line upon Line " and " Precept upon Precept " I have not examined, but am ready to admit, without an examination, that they are probably less objectionable than " The Peep of Day " ; partly because their subjects, being far less sacred, would of course suffer less by being travestied ; partly, because there are fewer traditions and popular notions in respect to this part of sacred history, which could be engrafted upon the Scripture-narrative ; and partly, also, because it seems to me incredible that such *baby-talk* as is given farther on could be kept up through more than a single book.

" The Peep of Day, or a Series of the earliest Religious Instruction the Infant Mind is capable of receiving," commences with some preliminary lessons, treating of God, of the body and the soul, of a father's and mother's care, of good and wicked angels, of heaven and hell, of the creation of the world and of man, of Eden, of the first sin and its consequences, and of the provision made for its pardon. The authoress, whose name I do not know, but whom I would not doubt to be a lady of estimable character and sincere piety, evidently believes that *eternal consequences* hang upon the reduction of an orthodox system of divinity to the capacity of " the infant mind." Indeed, the " minute history of our Lord," said before to constitute the book, is merely given in it as a part of such a system of divinity. The authoress introduces the work with such remarks as these : —

"And will it be deemed *undesirable* to instruct the infant in religion, when it is remembered that impressions made early on the mind are the most vivid and the most durable; — that the readiest access is obtained to the young and tender heart; — that *wrong* notions will be conceived by the ever busy intellect, if left uninstructed; and that life being uncertain, the eternal happiness of a child, already knowing good from evil, *may* be endangered by delay?" — p. vii.;

evidently showing (not to exaggerate her views) that she regards children who die without the essentials of an orthodox faith, at an age so very young that they can understand nothing higher than her *nursery-dialect*, as by no means secure from the danger of eternal misery. The following lines prefixed to her work imply the same by their conditional form of expression: —

"And have you lodg'd your darling in those arms,
Fond mother? Did you, as his reason dawn'd,
And he began to muse on things unseen,
Unfold the history of a Saviour's love,
And painful death? And has that love won his?
O! then should death's dark cloud arise,
And from your sight conceal his cherub form,
How sweet 't will be to catch his parting smile,
To see the infant angel, as he soars,
Cling fondly round his own beloved Lord!" — p. xi.*

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* Our authoress begins her poetic apology for plunging infant minds into the deep mysteries of her theology with the following lines, of which the second, to say the least, is not quite fortunate in all its associations: —

"And did our Shepherd bid us feed his lambs!
Behold I have prepared the tenderest grass,
That grows on Zion's hill. Here feeble lambs
May find sweet nourishment, and gather strength
To climb the verdant heights, where the fair flock
On richer pasture feed. Say not too soon
I urge their tottering steps." — p. x.

It would be some mitigation in the case, if the "fond mother" were

Such appear to have been the motives which, as with scorpion-sting, stimulated the authoress to undertake her difficult task ; — motives which most, even of a stern faith, will probably agree with me in deeming to be as erroneous in their terrific apprehensions, as they may be commendable in their benevolent feelings. It is possible that some, in a ferocious zeal to carry out a system to all its logical conclusions, and to repress all natural feelings as partaking of the depravity of our nature, have believed, or thought they believed, that infants dying upon the day of their birth will *suffer endless torment for the sin of Adam* ;* but there can be

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allowed, without agonizing apprehensions, to defer the foreing of this spiritual aliment down the throat of her loved one, till it should be old enough to chew it for itself, or, in other words, *to read*. But no ; it is expressly stated in the Prefaee, that the book is designed, among other objeets of its publication, "3. as an aid to the young mother in her eonversations with her ehild of four or five years old" ; and certainly much of the book is adapted in point of style even to a tenderer age. It is true that we also find "4. as a book for Sunday reading for the same child at five or six" ; but this appears to be contemplated rather as a review of the ehild's earlier lessons than as a main design of the book. Its whole character, appearance, and profession show that the great end in its preparation was not to furnish a book for the reading of children, but a book of lessons especially for the use of the parent or teacher in oral inculcation. It is an 18mo volume of 228 pages, and is entirely destitute of those illustrations by whieh the Tract Society understands so well how to render its books for juvenile reading attraetive to the young eye. No ; it is simply a *theological text-book*, to be used in that *forcing process*, to which this lady attaches such fearful importanee, and to which she would stimulate the "fond mother" by the dread apprehension, that, if her "darling" should be taken from her, even before it were old enough to read, without having learned these lessons, it might descend to the pit of everlasting woe !

* It is so common, in these days of mitigated orthodoxy, to repel

no question, that, upon this point, *nature* has now at length gained a complete victory. Universalism (if

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indignantly the assertion that such views have ever been held, as a malicious calumny, that perhaps even this so modified a statement may incur censure, unless fortified by some testimony. I will therefore quote the following, which happens to be at hand, from a most unexceptionable witness, the revered Dr. Watts: —

"Since I have Occasion, in this Place, to mention the *Education of Children*, amongst persons of the Establish'd Church, and those that have *separated from it*, I could scarce excuse it to my own Conscience, if I should neglect to make this *solemn Remark* on both (*viz.*) that there is something very dangerous that is early impressed on the Minds of Children of the one Party and the other, and they unhappily learn it from the different respective Catechisms in which they are instructed. . . . . [The error pointed out by Dr. Watts in the Established Church has respect to *baptismal regeneration*]

"Among the *Dissenters*, one Part of the Education is usually learning the Catechism written *by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster*. Now in the 19th Answer it is said, *That all Mankind by their Fall, are under the Wrath and Curse of God, and so made liable to all the Miseries in this Life, to Death itself, and to the Pains of Hell forever:* And some Persons have been so grossly unwise, as to assert under this influence, that there are Children of a Span long suffering the Vengeance of God in Hell, for their Interest in the Sin of *Adam*. Now the very Hint of such a Notion frights Children terribly, and while they are required to love God with all their Hearts, it gives them a very terrible and cruel Notion of the great and blessed God, who has ordain'd young Children to these everlasting Torments for the Sin of *Adam*.

"There are some that deny this Answer, and renounce this Doctrine roundly." — "*Orthodoxy and Charity united*," p. 373.

Dr. Watts then proceeds to state, as if the views of another, those which he had himself expressed and defended in a work published anonymously five years before, and entitled "The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind."

"Indeed there is one Author that has endeavoured to explain it in a moderate way, and to make a just Distinction upon this Subject, and that is in the last Question of a Book called the *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*. There it is shewn that all good Christians by their faith in *Christ*, are become the Children of *Abraham*, and that they and

you will pardon the word), yes, *ultra-universalism*, is now the general faith of the Church, so far as *infants* are

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their infant Children have an interest in the Promise made to *Abraham*, Gal. iii. 26, 29, (*viz.*) that *God would be their God, and the God of their Seed*, which gives abundant Hope for the Children of good Parents dying in Infancy, that they are translated to the Blessedness of Heaven, and the Hope of a joyful Resurrection by the *Covenant of Abraham*. And it is the Children of the Wicked, who have never accepted of the Covenant of Grace, are left under the Curse, *i. e.*, of temporal Death, which *Adam* had incurred for himself and his Posterity, and that without any Prediction or Promise of any Resurrection at all. Now I speak of those who never sinned actually, nor enjoyed a State of personal Trial for themselves in this World. *See the original Writer.*

"When these things will be corrected in the Education of Children, of the one Side or the other, it is only the Providence of God can determine."—*Do.*, p. 375.

What an illustration is given of the *dread power of theological system*, not only by the errors which Dr. Watts condemns, but which were so prevalent when he published this work, (in 1745, but little more than a century ago,) that he seems almost to have despaired of any speedy correction of them; but quite as strikingly to my own mind, by the intermediate view in which Dr. Watts attempts to unite "Orthodoxy and Charity," and the fact that, with all his learning, his benevolence, and his liberality beyond his sect and age, he could not bring himself to admit, as either *scriptural* or *rational*, the salvation of all infants, (because not all provided for in any *covenant*,) and could find, for "the infants of wicked parents," no escape from "everlasting torments for the sin of Adam," except in the *gulf of annihilation!* The conclusion of his inquiry in the work referred to, "The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind," is thus expressed:—

"Upon the whole, the Opinion of the Salvation of all Children, as it has no Countenanee from the Bible, so it has no Foundation in the Reason of Things; and the Scheme of the Transactions of God with Men as represented in Scripture appears much more eonsistent and uniform according to the Hypothesis I have here proposed.

"Yet if any of my Readers are utterly averse to these Sentiments, let them find out wherein I have run counter to the Word of God. The Scripture brings down the Infants of wicked Parents to the Grave, and leaves them there, and so do I: The Scripture has not provided any Resurrection, neither can I do it."—p. 314.

concerned ; and in regard to older children, the general tendency to err seems to me to be far rather in *deferring*, than in *anticipating*, the period of moral and religious responsibility ; — a tendency, allow me to say, which it is but natural should be the strongest in those who are otherwise of the sternest faith.

In speaking, therefore, of the FUNDAMENTAL ERROR of the authoress of " The Peep of Day," I cannot doubt that I have the general sentiments of the Christian world with me ; I cannot doubt that I have *your* sentiments. And to this fundamental error it seems to me that the remarkable faults of the writings of this lady are to be ascribed. Hence it is, that, in her zeal for the salvation of infants, she deems it necessary to thunder so continually in their ears the terrific name of the prison of the lost,* in order that they may thus be

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Is it not possible, that, a century hence, some opinions now held will seem as absurd and incredible as now appear to us both the opinions condemned and those advocated in the preceding extracts, written a century ago, by one of the wisest and best men of the age?

* I have mentioned, in a previous note, that, in her "Scripture Facts," I counted the word "hell" sixty-eight times. This number was obtained by a rapid turning over of the pages, which might leave several instances for a careful gleaner. The care with which the word has been *distributed* through these stories, most of them having not the *slightest* natural connection with such an idea, illustrates still farther her *monomania* upon this point. Of the fifty-two stories, (with the accompanying verses,) one contains the word seven times (!), another six times, and another five; four contain it three times, and seven twice; while no fewer than twenty-four (!) contain it once; leaving only fourteen of the whole number free from it. And even of these fourteen, three have the word "devil," one has "damnation," and one other (No. 47, on Christ's Ascension!) will hardly be thought to have gained greatly in having, as a substitute, "that dark and burning place where Satan will torment them for ever and ever." If it

driven, with that *faith* which is essential to acceptance, into the arms of the Saviour. Hence it is, that she deems it a sacred duty so to degrade, and misrepresent, and even *travesty* the truths of Scripture, in order that, if possible, by reducing them to the comprehension and the tastes of the youngest, she may force enough of the *prepared grass*, to use her own image, down their tender throats, to secure their souls from everlasting ruin. It is by no means wonderful, that, in the *stupendous urgency of such an end*, she has been *reckless about the means*.

But I am perhaps violating philosophical method in attempting to account for the peculiar phenomena of "The Peep of Day," before presenting some of those phenomena. Without further delay, therefore, I will quote some brief passages from the preliminary lessons of which I have spoken.

"Who holds up the sun that it does not fall? It is God." — p. 15.

"A little while ago there was no such creature as you. Then God made your little body, and he sent you to your mother, who loved you as soon as she saw you. . . . .

"But remember who gave you this mother. God sent you to a dear mother, instead of putting you in the fields, where no one would have seen you, or taken care of you." — pp. 20, 21.

"You know that God lives in heaven.* He sits† on a great white throne. He has no body, for he is a spirit.

"Does he live in heaven alone? — No; angels stand all around his throne." — p. 33.

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were worth the pains, another and perhaps still richer harvest might be gathered from "The Peep of Day."

* "The heaven of heavens cannot contain him." 2 Chron. ii. 6.

† Will the authoress add a note in her next edition, explaining this in connection with her next statement?

"Now God is your father, he can keep Satan from hurting you. Pray to him and say; 'O dear Father, keep me from being wicked like the devil, and from going to hell.'"—p. 41.*

"Afterwards God placed the sun in the sky, and bade it shine all day, and go from one end of the world to the other. . . . It cannot fall for God holds it up."—pp. 48, 49.†

"You know that the wicked angel Satan hates God, and he hated Adam and Eve. He wished to make them naughty, that they might go to hell, and be burned in his fire."—p. 59.

"Now Adam felt pain in his body sometimes; and his hair became grey,‡ and at last he was quite old.

"Eve was often very sick and weak, and tears run down her cheeks. Poor Adam and Eve! if you had obeyed God, you would have been happy for ever. . . . .

"And they would have gone to hell, and all their children too, had not God taken pity upon them. God, who is very kind, had found out a way to save them.

"God had said to his Son, a long, long while before, 'Adam and Eve, and all their children must go to hell for their wickedness, unless you die instead of them. My beloved Son, I will send you; you shall have a body; you shall go and live in the world, and you shall obey me, and you shall die for Adam and his children.'§

"The Son said to his father, 'I will come: I will do all that you desired me to do. It is my delight to obey you.'

"So the Son promised that he would die for Adam and Eve, and for their children."—pp. 62, 63.

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* What but the most desperate *hell*-ucination could ever lead one to teach a young child such a form of prayer?

† One hardly knows which to admire most, the *astronomy* or the *physiology* of this book.

‡ We should like also to know whether Adam became *bald* or not.

§ Even if it be not presumption in the highest kind of poetry to frame language for the Almighty, what must we think, in simple prose for young children, which they will understand literally, of putting

The mysteries of the fall and of the eternal covenant of redemption having now been presented, the way is *theologically open* for the coming of Christ into the world, and for his history, which occupies most of the remaining Lessons. To show more directly to the eye, how greatly our authoress has improved upon the already charming simplicity of the sacred narratives, and how truly she has given us *another gospel*, in addition to, and correction of, the other four, I will sometimes place in the margin of an extract the corresponding passage in the Scriptures, mostly from her own references; trusting that, where I omit to do this, your own minds will supply it none the less. I will also prefix to each extract the number and title of the Lesson from which it has been taken.

"Lesson 13. The Virgin Mary. — After Adam and Eve had been dead a long while, and when the world was full of people, God said to his Son, 'Now go down into the world.'

"But the Son must be a little baby first — every body is a little baby at first.

"So God chose to send his Son to be the baby of a poor woman. This woman's name was Mary. Mary had no little children. She was a good woman, and loved God. God's Holy Spirit was in her, and made her meek and gentle.

Luke i. 30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.
31. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

"One day an angel came to her. When Mary saw the bright angel, she was frightened; but the angel said, 'Fear not Mary, God loves you. He will send you a baby, that shall be the Son of God. You shall

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our own words, and *such* words, into the mouth of the Infinite Majesty? The different privileges of the poet and of the writer of plain didactic prose, and the different laws of *veracity* in the two kinds of composition, should be kept in view throughout this examination.

call his name Jesus. He will come to save people from Satan.' *

32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? . . .
46. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"Mary was much surprised at what the angel said. She thought she was not good enough to have such a baby as the Lord Jesus.†

"When the angel was gone back to heaven, Mary sang a sweet song of praise to God for his goodness. Mary said, 'My soul praises God, and my spirit is glad because of my Saviour.'

"Mary called her baby her Saviour, ‡ for she knew that he would save her from hell."

"L. 14. The Birth of Jesus. — Now before Mary's baby was born, a great king said that every body must pay him some money. So Mary and Joseph took some money, and left their house, and went a great way to pay the money to the king. § At last they came to a town called Bethlehem.

Luke ii. 5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

"It was night. Where could they sleep? They went to an inn, and said, 'Will you let us in? we have come from a great way off.'

"But the master of the inn said, 'I have no room in my inn for you.'

"What could poor Mary do? Must she sleep in the street?

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* The peculiar monomania of the writer doubtless led her to regard this as containing the essence of all the glorious predictions made by the angel.

† The Evangelist and our authoress seem to be quite at variance in respect to the cause of Mary's surprise.

‡ Mary's own explanation in v. 48 shows that, in using this language, she *could not* have been speaking of "her baby."

§ It would be a great relief to many a poor body in these days, if simply *being taxed* were, as this improver upon the Bible makes it, *paying the tax*.

Mary said she would sleep in the stable, if the master would let her.*

"So Mary and Joseph went into the stable. There were cows and asses in the stable.

"While Mary was in the stable, God sent her† the little baby he had promised her. She knew it was the Son of God, though it looked like other little babies."

7. And she brought forth her first-born son.

"L. 15. The Shepherds. — These shepherds saw a great light. A beautiful angel came from heaven. The poor shepherds were afraid; but the angel said, 'Fear not, I have sweet news to tell you. God has sent his own Son from heaven to save you from hell.‡ He is a baby now, lying in a manger. Go to Bethlehem, and you will find him.'"

Luke ii. 10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes lying in a manger.

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* Did our authoress hear this dialogue, and see the cows (!) and asses in the stable, by some peculiar *clairvoyance*, which could hear as well as see, and triumph over time as well as space?

† What is this, pardon my asking, but a *silly lie*, such as is sometimes told to children, not to deceive them long, but to undermine their regard for truth and their confidence in the truth of their parents and teachers, having in this case the peculiar aggravation that it is in direct contradiction to v. 5 of the sacred narrative, as well as to the commonest laws of physiology? Excuse my speaking of these matters, which I would gladly pass by, if this *lady* and the Tract Society had passed them by, or if the expressions had been such that we could regard them as merely figurative. But this is now the fourth time that this offence against truth and decency has been obtruded upon our nostrils. I do not profess to write, as does the authoress of "The Peep of Day," for the instruction of parents and teachers; but this single lesson is worth many of hers put together: *Truth* is *truth*, whatever it treats of; and *truth*, or at least *silence, is better than a lie, upon any subject*.

‡ The good lady seems to fancy that the angels are as familiar with this word as she is; and so she adds it to improve St. Luke's narrative, just as some profane persons cannot repeat a story, without sprink-

"L. 16. THE WISE MEN. — They came in, and there they saw Mary and her child Jesus; they fell down, and began to praise him, and to call him the Son of God, and the King.

Mat. ii. 11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

"They took out their presents and gave them to him. Mary was poor; but now she had some money to buy things for her little baby." *

"L. 17. KING HEROD. — God sent one of his bright angels to speak to Joseph when he was asleep.

Mat. ii. 13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

"The angel said, 'A wicked king wants to kill the baby. Get up, Joseph, take Mary and the baby a great way off.' So Joseph got up quickly; he took his ass, he put Mary on it, and she held the baby. It was dark when they set off. Nobody saw them go. †

"The next morning ‡ some men came

16. Then Herod, when

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ling in a proper seasoning of oaths. Indeed, one might suppose, from her writings, that she regards it as her especial vocation to familiarize the minds of babes (no, "babies") with the idea and name of "hell"; and, by this horrid branding, to prepare the way early for that *extinction of the social susceptibilities* which Professor Stuart thinks may be essential to the happiness of heaven, or for those *demoniac joys* which, according to Baxter, swell the raptures of the blest. See pp. 26, 87.

* But why not gratify our curiosity fully, by telling us what pretty things she bought "for her little baby," and where she bought them, and how much they cost?

† Except, of course, our authoress, whom the darkness could not prevent from seeing particulars which the Evangelist has unaccountably omitted. How could he have neglected to say anything about the ass, which is in all the pictures? For aught that appears in his meagre story, Mary might have gone to Egypt on foot, and Joseph have carried "the baby."

‡ Had it not been for our authoress, we never should have known how narrow their escape was. How thoughtless in St. Matthew to omit a circumstance which so heightens the interest of the story!

he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.

with swords. Herod had sent them. They were come to kill all the babies. They opened every door and said, 'Is there a baby here?' Then they snatched it from its mother, and killed it, and the poor mother cried bitterly."

"L. 20. THE FIRST MIRACLE.— When the master had tasted it he said, 'What nice wine this is! where did it come from?'*

"The servants told him how Jesus had told them to fill the jars with water. Then all the people at the feast knew that Jesus had turned the water into wine."

Luke vii. 12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

"L. 21. SEVERAL MIRACLES. — They met some men carrying a dead man to put him in the ground.

"A poor old woman† came after, crying very much. She was the mother of the dead man. He was her only son. . . . . .

14. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"Jesus said, 'Get up, young man.'"‡

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* How much of character is often revealed by some trifling circumstance! Thus, this question (which, with the answer, St. John omitted) exhibits to us the master of the feast as a lover of "nice wine," and desirous of knowing where it could be procured.

† No one can fail to see how much a knowledge of the mother's age heightens the interest of the narrative.

‡ To ask once for all a question which continually recurs to the mind in reading these lessons, is anything gained by changing the language of Scripture, and especially the words of our Saviour, when they are already simple enough for the comprehension of any child? On the other hand, *is not very much lost* through an unavoidable confusion of associations and a consequent imperfection of remembrance, especially to be regretted when the words are all *of gold*? Will not the language of "The Peep of Day" be continually struggling in the mind with the language of the Bible, and, having the great advantage of the first impression, not unfrequently gain the victory?

And here will my Episcopal brethren pardon a digression, to ask them if it would not be better that all the portions of the Bible printed in the Prayer Book should follow, as some of them do, the received ver-

"L. 22. THE SINNER AND SIMON.—Why did Jesus come into the world?—To save us from hell.

1 Tim. i. 15. Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

"But why did God say that people must go to hell?—Because every body was naughty."*

"L. 24. JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.—A rich man† came to Jesus, and fell down at his feet and said, 'I have one little girl and she is very sick, pray come and make her well.' And Jesus went with the rich man.

"Jesus said to the father and mother of the little girl, 'Come with me into the house. Peter, James, and John, you may come in, but no one else.'

Luke viii. 51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

"So they went up into the room where the little girl was lying in bed.‡ . . . .

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sion? Is anything gained, is not much lost, in having a "Psalter" which is often quite at variance with the "Book of Psalms"? To cite a single instance, not the most striking, but one which gained a notoriety last year from the dispute whether Mr. Winthrop's quotation at the close of the session of Congress occurred in the Bible or not, is there not quite a difference between these two versions of Psalm lxviii. 6?—

"God setteth the solitary in families: he bringing out those which are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."—*Common Version.*

"He is the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and bringeth the prisoners out of captivity; but letteth the runagates continue in scareeness."—*Psalter.*

* A fair example of this lady's *hell*-omania. The Apostle dispensed with the word altogether; but she must use it twice, though, in the second case, nothing but an insane fondness for the word would have led her to use the phrase "go to hell," rather than "go there."

† The three evangelists who relate this miracle seem all to have been ignorant about Jairus's property, or not to have attached any importance to it. The value of money is now better understood.

‡ No one had thought to mention before that she was *in bed.* It gives us a more definite idea to know all these little particulars. Strange that the evangelists should have been so careless about them!

54. And he put them all out.

"Jesus said, 'Those people must be put out of the room.'"

"L. 26. The Kindness of Jesus. — Another time the disciples were unkind to some little children. Some poor women * brought the children to Jesus, but the disciples were standing round, and they would not let the women come near.

Mark x. 13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

"'Go away,' they said, 'you must not bring babies here to trouble us.' But Jesus heard them speak, and was very angry † with the disciples. . . .

14. But when Jesus saw *it* he was much displeased.

"Then he took the children in his arms and put his hands upon them, and prayed to his Father, and blessed them."

16. And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

"L. 35. The Last Supper. — After supper Jesus took some bread and broke it in little bits, ‡ and gave a piece to each of the disciples and said, 'This is my body; I am going to die; eat this and think of me."

Mat. xxvi. 26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

"L. 36. The Garden. — Then Jesus went a little way off by himself, and fell upon the ground and began to pray. He said, 'O Father, save me from death! but do what thou wilt, not what I will.'

Matt. xxvi. 39. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

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* With some, (especially of the rich, to which class our lady may perhaps belong, as she speaks in her Preface of a "governess,") nothing would so exalt our Saviour's condescension as the fact (?) that these were the children of poor people. The evangelists may have been too poor themselves to care to mention this; or they may have been too much absorbed in thoughts of higher wealth.

† Some persons of tender sensibilities, in speaking of our Saviour, change the word "angry," which they fear may convey a wrong idea, into "displeased." We cannot be surprised, that the peculiar tastes of our authoress have led her to do just the reverse.

‡ Shall we believe our authoress, or the evangelists, in respect to the time? The information about the *size of the pieces* is of course wholly new.

"He prayed very earnestly, and he felt so unhappy that the blood came out of his skin and fell on the ground.* . . . .

Luke xxii. 44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.

"When he said that, God made all the wicked people fall upon their backs upon the ground. Then Jesus could have run away, but he chose to stay that he might die for sinners.†

John xviii. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

"The wicked people soon got up; God let them get up; but Jesus said to them, 'You may take me, but you must let my disciples go away.'"

"L. 41. The Cross. — Then he spoke to Jesus and said, 'Remember me and save me.' He wanted Jesus to save him from hell. And Jesus said, 'You shall come to heaven with me to-day."‡

Luke xxiii. 42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

"L. 42. The Cross. — It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus died. He had been nailed to the cross all the day."§

Mark xv. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

"L. 49. The Dinner. — Then Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs,' (that is, 'Teach other people to love me. Go and tell people about my dying for them.')

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* All questions of interpretation respecting the "cup" and the "sweat" are now settled. It is satisfactory to know that we can now strike out from St. Luke's narrative that phrase "as it were," which has led so many into error.

† Their being laid, by a special miracle, *upon their backs*, renders the scene more picturesque; and certainly gave a better opportunity for that *running away*, which I suspect nobody ever thought of before our authoress.

‡ The questions about an intermediate state, and where our Lord went when he died, are for ever set at rest by this extract, and the following from Lesson 39:—"Where did Judas's soul go when he died? It went to hell, and to Satan. Judas is in that wicked place now."

§ This discrepancy becomes merely apparent, if this lady, like some others, does not rise till nine o'clock, and consequently is not aware that the day begins any earlier.

"You, my little children, are Christ's lambs, and I feed you when I talk to you about Christ. I feed your souls, and try to keep them from hell." *

Rev. xxii. 14. Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
15. For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

"L. 52. JOHN. — Then the angel went on speaking, and said, 'Jesus will soon come down from heaven to judge the world. He will open the gates of heaven to let those people in who mind God's word; but those who tell lies, and do wicked things, shall be shut out.'"

Unless the angel were utterly mistaken, whose prospect of admission can possibly be fainter than that of the authoress of "The Peep of Day"? † In this Lesson, a picture of heaven is given, by representing the visions of St. John in Patmos as literal reality. In the next and final Lesson, as might have been anticipated, we have a most minute and sensuous account of the judgment-day and its consequences, first in terrific prose, and then, if possible, in still more terrific verse. But enough — more than enough — of such things have been quoted.

And now, Brethren, having made such a full, perhaps needlessly full, exhibition of the character of this work,

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* Certainly, feeding them as she does, the good lady will succeed, if the *homœopathic* principle applies in this case.

† And yet this lady, (perhaps the strongest proof of her *mania* which could possibly be given,) as if conscious of an *absolute truthfulness*, prefixes to her lessons the following note, and, lest we should suspect it to be merely a general statement admitting exceptions, is careful to italicize the strong word "*every*." — "As it is evident that the greatest accuracy is essential in the foundation of an edifice, the writer has endeavoured to prove *every* statement either by the notes or by the references prefixed to each chapter." — p. xvi.

I confidently and solemnly appeal to you, and ask you, as you have intellects, consciences, and hearts, if it is *pardonable*, that, through your instrumentality, such a tissue of folly and falsehood and horror should be impressed, perhaps to remain for ever, upon the sensitive and tenacious mind of the infant, — should be laid in the very deepest foundations of the intellect and character, — should be branded, as with letters of fire, (and *such fire !*) upon the tender sensibilities and affections, at their very tenderest age. I may perhaps appear to some to attach an undue importance to a *mere child's book ;* but it is *because* it is a child's book that I attach this importance to it ; and I assure you, that, considering *for what age* it is written, and *upon what principles* it is written, and *in what way* it is written, I cannot but regard " The Peep of Day " as both the *most important* and the *most execrable* book of your whole series, — above all the rest, the *towering*, *deadly* Bohun Upas. And I do not believe that you can study it, as a treatise should be studied before it is made the text-book of " the earliest religious instruction the infant mind is capable of receiving," without coming, yourselves, to the same conclusion.

I have now done. I have submitted to your consideration the most important questions which have occurred to me, and have added some data, of course not at all complete, for answering them. I have endeavoured to avoid everything like ungrounded assertion or polemic declamation. I have designed to take no advantage of my anonymous mode of address, which, indeed, I have adopted more from a regard to courtesy and modesty,

than from any belief that so thin a veil would long hide me if others wished to find me out. I have not supposed that you yourselves would wish me greatly to "extenuate," and I feel confident that I have not "set down aught in malice." What I have written, I have written under a strong sense of duty. I have written with great reluctance, and wishing that I could find some more agreeable way of satisfying the demands of conscience. If aught has been amiss, I beg to be forgiven.*

The entire matter now rests with you. You form an independent corporation, not subject to ecclesiastical or

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* If anything which I have written should seem objectionable to any, and much perhaps may, I beg them, before condemning me, to consider whether the objectionableness does not lie in the nature of the subject itself, rather than in the mode of treatment. That, with all my care, I have effectually avoided all the peculiar dangers to which I have been exposed, while writing under the *lurid glare* of some of the topics which I have ventured to approach, I have not the presumption to claim. And it might be claiming more than consists with our weak and imperfect nature. Constituted as we are, there are certain vicinities which it is not safe for us to remain in, even for the best of purposes. There are certain conceptions of absurdity and horror which it is injurious to admit fully into the mind, even for the sake of convicting and condemning them. In the unwelcome, possibly thankless, task which I have undertaken, I have felt it my duty to introduce some extracts which I would advise no person, especially no young person, to read more than once; and which, notwithstanding the guaranty of so respectable and influential a Society, I could rather wish might never be read at all. I shall consider them *absolutely harmless* only then, if such a supposition may be made, when they are sunk beyond recovery in the *gulf of oblivion*. As to what I have myself written, I can of course offer no guaranty, except the very inadequate one of a good intent, and a strong desire not only to avoid everything *really* deserving of censure, but also to obey throughout the Apostle's precept, "Abstain from all *appearance* of evil."

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